

# Are We on the Road to War?

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*"Are We on the Road to War?" is the text of a speech which Leo Szilard has recently given at nine American colleges and universities in order to invite students to participate in an experiment. The response could show whether a political movement of the kind described in the speech would take off the ground provided it were started on a sufficiently large scale. When the BULLETIN asked Dr. Szilard for permission to reprint the text of the speech, he agreed on condition that he may extend the experiment to the readers of the BULLETIN. Accordingly, those readers who believe that they would be willing to spend two per cent of their income for campaign contributions—provided that the political objectives formulated meet with their approval—are invited to participate in the experiment by writing Dr. Szilard before May 31, 1962, at the Dupont Plaza Hotel, Washington 6, D.C., giving their name and address and briefly indicating the degree of their interest. Reprints may be secured from the BULLETIN OF THE ATOMIC SCIENTISTS, 935 E. 60th Street, Chicago 37, Illinois. Single copies, 10 cents; 25 or more, seven cents each.*

For a number of years now, you have had an opportunity to observe how we, as a nation, respond to the actions of the Russians, and how the Russians respond to our responses. Those of you who have watched closely the course of events in the past six months, may have been let to conclude that we are headed for an all-out war. I myself believe that we are,

and that our chances of getting through the next ten years without war are slim.

I personally find myself in rebellion against the fate that history seems to have in store for us, and I suspect that some of you may be equally rebellious. The question is, what can you do?

War seems indeed to be inevitable, unless it is possible somehow to alter the pattern of behavior which America and Russia are exhibiting at present. You, as Americans, are not in a position to influence the Russian government; it follows that you would have to bring about a change in the attitude of the American government which, in turn, may bring about a similar change in the attitude of the Russian government.

It is conceivable that if a dedicated minority were to take effective political action, they could bring about the change in attitude that is needed. But such a minority can take effective action only if it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which it may unite.

Ever since the end of the war, the policies of the great powers have consistently followed the line of least resistance, and this line leads to an unlimited arms race. I do not believe that America can be made secure by keeping ahead in such an arms race.

There have been repeated attempts to stop the arms race by negotiating an agreement that would provide for some form of arms control. So far, all such attempts have failed, and each time they were followed by the continuation of the arms race, with renewed vigor.

Toward the end of the Eisenhower administration, it was generally expected that the next administration

would adopt a new approach to this problem and that a fresh attempt would be made to bring the arms race under control.

When Khrushchev was in New York a year ago last October, I tried to see him, in the hope of finding out how responsive he might be to such a new approach. I was told that they had scheduled fifteen minutes for me but, as it turned out, the conversation went on for two hours. At that time, it was not known whether Kennedy or Nixon would get elected, and I started off the conversation by saying that no matter who is elected, the government would try to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of stopping the arms race. Khrushchev answered—and he spoke in all seriousness—that he believed this also.

A year ago last November, I checked out of the hospital in New York, where I had been confined for over a year, took a taxi to the airport, and flew to Moscow to attend the sixth Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs. I was accompanied by my wife, who is also my doctor, and I stayed on in Moscow for about a month beyond the end of the conference. I stayed on in Moscow in order to engage in private conversations with our Russian colleagues, because I knew from experience that only in private conversations is it possible to get anything across to them or to discover what they really believe to be true.

None of our Russian colleagues brought up the issue of bomb tests in any of these conversations in Moscow, even though two years earlier some of them had been passionately interested in this issue. I found, however, an undiminished interest in far-reaching disarmament which would result in substantial savings. On one occasion, I had tea with Fedorov, the General



Secretary of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with no one present except my interpreter. I had met Fedorov before and I always got along well with him. On this particular occasion, he spoke to me as follows:

You must really believe me when I tell you that we want general disarmament. You have seen all this construction work going on in Moscow; it has been going on for many years; still we are not able to catch up with the housing shortage. If we had disarmament, we could not only solve this problem, but many of our other economic problems as well. Also, we could develop other nations on an unprecedented scale. So far, we are building only one hydroelectric dam in Africa—the Aswan Dam in Egypt; if we had disarmament, we could, and we would, build twenty such dams in Africa.

I tried to impress upon our Russian colleagues that the Kennedy administration would make a serious effort to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of arms control, but that the new administration would need time—six months and more than six months perhaps—to find its bearings on this issue and to get organized to deal with it.

When I returned to this country in February, I decided to stay in Washington for a while.

In Washington, my friends told me that the government was going to make a sincere effort to reach an agreement with Russia on the cessation of bomb tests and that a reasonable proposal would be made to the Russians on this issue. They would have liked to hear from me that Russia would be likely to accept such a proposal, but coming fresh from Moscow, I had serious doubts on this score.

The invasion of Cuba took me by surprise. When I first heard about it, it was not clear, as yet, whether we were going to give air support to the invading Cuban exiles and whether we would, if necessary, send in the Marines also. My immediate reaction was that of alarm, for I believed that if we did any of these things, we would seriously risk war with Russia. I did not think that Russia would try to intervene in the Caribbean area, and I did not think that the Russians

would launch long-range rockets aimed at our cities. I thought, however, that Russia might make some military move elsewhere, probably in the Middle East.

In retrospect, it would seem that I was wrong, for Tom Slick of the Slick Oil Company, in San Antonio, Texas recently set forth, apparently on good authority, that, if America had openly intervened in Cuba, at that point, Russia would have moved into West Berlin.

I would not venture to appraise just how close we came to an all-out war on the occasion of the Cuban incident. I am reasonably certain, however, that if our intervention in Cuba had been successful, this would have blocked for many years to come any possibility of reaching an agreement on arms control with Russia. Failure to reach an accommodation on the Berlin issue might, of course, produce the same result.

I would not entirely exclude the possibility of war over Berlin, but to me, it seems more probable that this crisis will be resolved by some uneasy compromise, and that it will not lead to an all-out war. Russia may bring pressure on West Berlin in order to promote any one of a number of her foreign policy objectives, but on the larger issue, the issue of Germany, the true interest of America and Russia is the same. The true interest of both countries is to have Europe politically as stable as possible.

I am convinced that the Berlin issue could be satisfactorily resolved by negotiations, but this conviction is based on the belief that there is something that the Russians want that we should be willing to give them, and that there is something that we want that the Russians should be willing to give us in return.

There are many people who do not share this belief. They hold that the Berlin issue was artificially created by Russia for the purpose of humiliating America, for breaking up NATO, and for converting West Germany into a communist state.

Many people, perhaps the majority, believe that the Russians are very much like the Nazis; that they have concrete plans for bringing about, one way or another, our total defeat in Europe, and also for subjugating the whole world to their rule.

Many people have a black and white picture of the world; they believe that the nations fall into two classes: the peaceloving nations, and those who are not peaceloving. Amer-

ica, France, England, and generally speaking our allies, including Germany and Japan, are peaceloving nations. Russia and China are not peaceloving nations. Twenty years ago, the situation was somewhat different: at that time, Russia was a peaceloving nation, but Germany and Japan were not.

Many people believe that ever since the atomic bomb forced the unconditional surrender of Japan, America has unceasingly tried to rid the world of the bomb, and that Russian intransigence, alone, blocked progress in this direction.

When I listen to people who hold such views, I sometimes have the feeling that I have lived through all this before and, in a sense, I have. I was sixteen years old when the first World War broke out, and I lived at that time in Hungary. From reading the Hungarian newspapers, it would have appeared that whatever Austria and Germany did was right and whatever England, France, Russia, or America did was wrong. A good case could be made out for this general thesis, in almost every single instance. It would have been quite difficult for me to prove, in any single instance, that the newspapers were wrong, but somehow, it seemed to me unlikely that the two nations, located in the center of Europe, should be invariably right, and that all the other nations should be invariably wrong. History, I reasoned, would hardly operate in such a peculiar fashion, and gradually I was led to conclusions which were diametrically opposed to the views held by the majority of my schoolmates.

Many of my schoolmates regarded me as something of an oracle because I was able to cope with the mysteries of lower arithmetic which baffled them and one of them asked me one day quite early in the war who would lose the war. I said that I didn't know who *would* lose the war, but that I thought that I knew who *ought* to lose the war; I thought that Austria and Germany, as well as Russia, ought to lose the war. Since Austria and Germany fought on one side, and Russia on the other side, it was not quite clear how this could happen. The fact is, of course, that it did happen.

I am not telling you this in order to impress you with how bright I am. Nobody at sixty can claim to be as bright as he was at sixteen, even though in most cases it is not the intelligence that deteriorates, but the character. The point I am trying to make is that even in times of war,



you can see current events in their historical perspective, provided that your passion for the truth prevails over your bias in favor of your own nation.

After the first World War, when I lived in Berlin, a distinguished friend of mine, Michael Polanyi, asked me one day what I thought ought to be the rule of human conduct regulating the behavior of an individual in society. "Clearly," he said, "you cannot simply ask a man to be generous to other people, for if the other people are mean to him, and if he follows your rule, he may starve to death." "But," said Polanyi, "perhaps the rule ought to be 'Be one per cent more generous to people than they are to you.'" This should be sufficient, he thought, because if everyone were to follow this rule, the earth would, step by step, turn into a livable place.

I told him that, to my mind, this would not work at all, because if two people behave the same way toward each other, each is bound to think that he is 30 per cent more generous than the other. Clearly, the rule would have to allow for this bias. Perhaps if we were to stipulate as the rule of conduct, "Be 31 per cent more generous to the others than they are to you" such a rule might work.

America and Russia are not following any such rule of conduct. Moreover, their bias greatly exceeds 30 per cent.

Most Americans apply a yardstick to America's actions which is very different from the yardstick which they apply to Russia's actions. Whenever their bias in favor of their own nation gets into conflict with the truth, the odds are that the bias will prevail. As a result of this, they are not capable of seeing current events in their historical perspective. They may well realize that we are in trouble, but they cannot correctly diagnose the cause of the trouble and therefore, they are not in a position to indicate what the right remedy might be.

The people who have sufficient passion for the truth to give the truth a chance to prevail, if it runs counter to their bias, are in a minority. How important is this minority? It is difficult to say at this point, for, at the present time, their influence on governmental decisions is not perceptible.

If you stay in Washington, you may gain some insight into the manner in

which governmental decisions come about; you may get a feel of what kind of considerations enter into such decisions, and what kind of pressures are at work.

With President Kennedy, new men moved into the administration. Many of them understand the implications of what is going on and are deeply concerned. But, they are so busy trying to keep the worst things from happening, on a day-to-day basis, that they have no time to develop a consensus on what the right approach would be, from the long-term point of view.

There are also a number of men in Congress, particularly in the Senate, who have insight into what is going on and who are concerned, but mostly they lack the courage of their convictions. They may give a lucid analysis of the trouble in private conversations and then at some point or other, they will say: "Of course, I could not say this in public."

In Washington, wisdom has no chance to prevail at this point.

Last September, *Life* magazine printed an article about me which said that I was in Washington trying to find out if there was a market for wisdom. Thereupon, I received a flood of letters from colleges and universities inviting me to give lectures. Most people get some pleasure out of hearing themselves talk, and so do I; yet I did not see much point in going around the country giving talks, if all I had to say was that there was no market for wisdom. Therefore, I declined all these invitations; that is, I declined them all, until Brandeis University invited me to attend a special convocation and receive an honorary doctor's degree. At that point, my vanity got the better of me, and I accepted. At Brandeis, I spoke at dinner informally to the trustees and fellows of the university, and this was my closest contact with grass roots since I moved to Washington—if, indeed, you may regard the trustees and fellows of Brandeis as grass roots.

I told them at Brandeis that I thought we were in very serious trouble; people asked me what there was that they could do about it, and I had no answer to give.

Is there, indeed, anything that these people—and for that matter I, myself—could do at this point that would make sense?

When I got back to Washington, I started to think about this, and I believe it will be best now if I simply recite to you how my thoughts developed from this point on.

The first thought that came to my mind was that in cooperation with others, I could try to set up an organization in Washington—a sort of lobby, if you will—which would bring to Washington, from time to time, scholars and scientists who see current events in their historical perspective. These men would speak with the sweet voice of reason, and our lobby could see to it that they be heard by people inside the administration, and also by the key people in Congress.

The next thing that occurred to me was that these distinguished scholars and scientists would be heard, but that they might not be listened to, if they were not able to deliver votes.

Would they be listened to if they were able to deliver votes?

The minority for which they speak might represent a few per cent of the votes, and a few per cent of the votes alone would not mean very much. Still, the combination of a few per cent of the votes and the sweet voice of reason might turn out to be an effective combination. And if the minority for which these men speak, were sufficiently dedicated to stand ready not only to deliver votes, but also to make very substantial campaign contributions, then this minority would be in a position to set up the most powerful lobby that ever hit Washington.

The problem which the bomb poses to the world cannot be solved except by abolishing war, and nothing less will do. But first of all, we must back away from the war to which we have come dangerously close.

Could such a dedicated minority agree not only on the long-term political objectives which need to be pursued in order to abolish war, but also on the immediate political objectives, the objectives which must be pursued in the next couple of years, in order to make the present danger of war recede to the point where attention can be focused on the task of abolishing war?

America cannot be made secure by keeping ahead in an atomic arms race and an agreement providing for arms control is a necessary first step toward abolishing war.

An agreement on arms control does not seem to be, however, "around the



corner." It might very well be, therefore, that *in the immediate future* America would have to take certain unilateral steps. Some of the steps would be taken in order to reduce the present danger of war; other steps would be taken so that if a war breaks out, which neither America nor Russia wants, it may be possible to bring hostilities to an end before there is an all-out atomic catastrophe.

Such unilateral steps are not adequate substitutes for negotiated agreements, and they can carry us only part of the way, but still there are some unilateral steps which should be taken at the present time and I propose to discuss at this point what these steps may be.

The issue of bomb tests and the issue of bomb shelters are peripheral issues; they are more the symptoms of the trouble we are in than the cause of the trouble, and I propose to turn now to issues which I believe to be more relevant.

1.) Nothing is gained by America's winning meaningless battles in the cold war, and a change of attitude in this regard is urgently needed. Take the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, for instance. This organization has at present no function whatsoever, and if it is maintained in existence at all, it should be maintained as an exercise in cooperation among nations.

The first director of this agency was an American, and his term expired recently. Since, next to America, the Soviet Union is the most important atomic power, America could have proposed that the next director of the agency be a Russian. Instead, America proposed a Swede, who was not acceptable to the Russians, and since America had the votes she was able to win one more victory in a meaningless battle of the cold war.

All this "victory" accomplished was to reduce the chances of finding some useful function for this agency, because the Russians resent being pushed around in this agency and there is no way for us to force them to play ball.

*I believe that it would be important for the government to reach a major policy decision, and for the President to issue an executive order against fighting meaningless battles in the cold war.*

We have a cultural exchange program with the Russians but their State Department and our State Department are playing a game of "if you hit our scientists, we shall hit your scientists." Accordingly, our State De-

partment imposes senseless travel restrictions on our Russian colleagues who visit this country. These travel restrictions are not aimed at the safeguarding of any secrets, but are merely a way of hitting back at travel restrictions which the Soviet government occasionally imposes on American scientists who travel about in Russia.

*I believe that representations ought to be made, at as high a level of the administration as is necessary, for the Secretary of State to find some other assignment in the State Department for those who have, up till now, handled the East-West Cultural Exchange Program.*

2.) I believe that America could and should make unilaterally two crucially important policy decisions and that she should proclaim these decisions.

*First of all, America should resolve and proclaim that she would not resort to any strategic bombing of cities or bases of Russia (either by means of atomic bombs or conventional explosives), except if American cities or bases are attacked with bombs, or if there is an unprovoked attack with bombs against one of America's allies.*

Further, America should make a second policy decision and should proclaim this decision. In order to understand the meaning and relevance of this second decision, it is necessary to consider the following:

Soon after the war, when Russia did not as yet have any atomic bombs, she proposed that the bomb be outlawed. This could take the form of a unilateral pledge, given by each atomic power, that it would not resort to the use of atomic bombs, either for the purpose of attacking cities or bases, or as a tactical weapon to be used against troops in combat.

Recently, Sulzberger of the *New York Times* discussed with Khrushchev the possibility of such unilateral pledges, renouncing the use of the bomb. Khrushchev said, on this occasion, that if there were a war, even if at first only conventional weapons were used, subsequently the side which is about to lose the war would find it impossible to abide by its pledge and would resort to the use of the bomb.

This brings out what I believe to be the crux of the issue, that today it might still be possible to resist force with force, but the objective of the use of force must no longer be victory. The objective must only be to

make a conquest difficult and expensive.

If force is used then an all-out war, which neither side wants, can be avoided only if both sides recognize that the use of force must not be aimed at victory, or anything approaching victory.

Keeping this point of view in mind, America could and *should* adopt the policy that, in case of war, if she were to use atomic bombs against troops in combat, she would do so only on her own side of the prewar boundary.

In case of war America would then be bound by a pledge to this effect as long as Russia imposed a similar restraint on her conduct of the war.

Manifestly, this type of use of atomic bombs would be a defensive operation and moreover, it would be a very effective defensive operation, either on the part of Russia or on the part of America, as long as the restraints remain in effect on both sides.

Such a pledge would be no less clear than the simple pledge renouncing the use of the bomb, but it would be much easier to keep and therefore it would be a more believable pledge. And if neither side aimed at anything approaching victory, then it would substantially reduce the danger of an all-out war.

When I discussed this issue in Germany three years ago, people there said that if the ground forces of the allies were pushed back to the Rhine, and America used atomic bombs against troops in combat between the Rhine and the Oder-Neisse line, many West German cities might be destroyed by American bombs. I do not know to what extent West German cities could be spared by a judicious tactical use of atomic bombs by American forces, but I do know that if America were to use bombs beyond the prewar boundary, West German cities would be destroyed by Russian bombs.

Recently, the United Nations Assembly vetoed with a more than two-thirds majority, 55 against 20, to outlaw the use of atomic bombs in war. The use of atomic bombs in warfare was declared by the Assembly to be a crime and a violation of the United Nations Charter.

Since the machinery of the United Nations was set up for the purpose of maintaining peace among the smaller nations, assuming the cooperation of the great powers to this end, attempts to regard a two-thirds vote of the Assembly as legally binding must necessarily fail. Still the United States must



not fly in the face of world opinion and simply disregard the vote of the General Assembly, when a two-thirds vote of the Assembly expresses the legitimate concern of the great majority of the nations that the use of atomic bombs in warfare might lead to a world catastrophe. Rather, out of respect for world opinion and in its own interest, the United States ought to go as far toward complying with it, as valid considerations for its own security permit. The restrictions on the use of atomic bombs in case of war which I am advocating, are advocated with this end in view.

Western Europe is not inferior to Russia either in manpower or in resources and it would be possible for Western Europe to build up within five years conventional forces to the point where it could renounce the use of atomic bombs against troops in combat in case of war. But even this would be to no avail unless the nations involved give up any thought of fighting limited wars for "limited objectives" and resort to force only to make a conquest difficult and, with luck, to prevent it.

As long as there is no agreement providing for arms control, and Russia remains in possession of large stockpiles of bombs, America has no choice but to maintain a strategic atomic striking force. However, it should maintain such a force only as protection against America or her allies being attacked with bombs. The number of bombs retained for this purpose need not be very large, and more important than the number of bombs retained is the invulnerability of the bases from which they would be launched. If these bases are invulnerable, so that no single massive attack against them could substantially damage America's ability to retaliate, then America needs to retain only enough bombs to be able to destroy in retaliation a substantial number of Russia's cities, after giving due notice to permit their orderly evacuation.

It must be made clear, however, that if America adopts the policy here advocated, she thereby renounces the threat of strategic bombing as a general *deterrent* because she could then make this threat only in case Russia would drop bombs, and drop them on *our* side of the prewar boundary.

I, personally, do not believe that America would lose much by giving up the threat of strategic bombing, because the deterrent effect of such a threat is negligible unless the threat is believable.

If America were to threaten to drop bombs on a large number of Russian cities in case of war, knowing full well that Russia would retaliate by dropping bombs on a large number of American cities, such a threat would be tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide. The threat of murder and suicide would not be a believable threat, in the context of the so-called Berlin Crisis, nor would it be a believable threat in the context of any other similar conflict in which America's rights and interests may be at stake, but not America's existence as a nation.

Those responsible for the planning of strategy in the Department of Defense would concede this much.

According to persistent press reports there is, however, an increasingly influential school of thought in the Department of Defense which holds that, in case of war with Russia, America may engage in strategic bombing, aimed at the destruction of Russian rocket bases and strategic air bases. America would not bomb any of Russia's cities if she can help it, as long as Russia did not bomb any of America's cities.

This school of thought holds that, at present, Russia does not have many long-range rocket bases and strategic air bases, that the location of many of these bases is known, and that most of them are vulnerable and could be destroyed by attacking them with bombs. By building enough long-range solid-fuel rockets (Minutemen) and submarines capable of launching intermediate range solid-fuel rockets (Polaris) America may be able to keep ahead in this game for the next five years.

Those who advocate such a policy believe that if America should succeed in knocking out, say, 90 per cent of Russia's strategic atomic striking forces, then the Russians would probably speak to us as follows: "We have enough rockets left to destroy a large number of American cities, but we know that if we did this America may retaliate by destroying all of our cities. Therefore, we are going to hold our fire and we propose to negotiate peace. We concede that the power balance has now shifted in America's favor and we are now willing to yield on a number of issues on which we took an inflexible stand prior to the outbreak of hostilities." If this were to happen America would have won a victory even though it may be a victory in a limited sense of the term only.

Naturally if there is a war and America resorts to the bombing of bases in Russia, one could not expect the Russians to sit idly by and watch America picking up step by step one base after another. It follows that America would have to start the strategic bombing of Russian bases with a sudden, massive attack and to try to destroy all vulnerable Russian bases of known location, in the first attack.

There are, of course, people in the Department of Defense who have serious doubts that America would actually carry out such a first strike against bases, in case of war, yet they believe that—at the present juncture—it is a good thing to threaten to bomb Russian bases in case of war because this is a more believable threat than the threat of "murder and suicide."

I do not know just how believable this threat is, but I do know that at best we are purchasing an increased restraint on Russia's part for a year or two, and that we are purchasing it at a very high price. For whether we adopt such a strategy or merely give Russia the impression that we have adopted such a strategy, we are provoking an all-out atomic arms race and may within a very few years reach the point of no return, in this regard.

*Therefore, I believe that it is imperative to oppose: (a) the adoption of plans which call for a first strike against Russian rocket and strategic air bases in case of war, and (b) the adoption of the policy of "detering" Russia, with the threat that America would resort to such a first strike in case of war.* I believe that the rejection of both these policies is an attainable political objective because there is considerable doubt within the administration of the wisdom of these policies.

3.) *America could and should resolve that atomic bombs and the means suitable for their delivery, which are supplied by her and which are stationed in Europe, shall remain in the hands of American military units which are under American command, rather than be placed under the control of NATO.* As long as America is committed to defend Western Europe, there is no valid argument for turning over bombs to the control of other Western European nations.

Germany is going to put increasingly strong pressure on the United States government to turn over such equipment to NATO control, and I would be in favor of balancing any such pressure by bringing domestic



political counterpressure to bear on the government.

America should stand firm in opposing the production of atomic and hydrogen bombs by Germany as well as the production of means suitable for their delivery.

It is conceivable, of course, that all attempts to achieve arms control may fail and that in the end it will not be within the power of the United States to prevent Germany from producing its own bombs and rockets. At about the same time the United States may however also free herself from her commitments to defend Germany against external military intervention. But we are not concerned at this point with developments that may conceivably occur in the unpredictable future.

4.) Not every issue can be solved by Congress passing a law, and there are borderline issues where political action alone can bring no solution because the specific knowledge is lacking of how to go about the solution. The issue of general disarmament seems to be such a borderline issue.

I believe that, at the present time, little could be gained by bringing pressure on the administration to enter into formal negotiations with Russia on the issue of general disarmament, because—as they say, “You can lead a horse to the water, but you can’t make him drink.”

I believe that no substantial progress can be made toward disarmament until Americans and Russians first reach a meeting of the minds on the issue of how the peace may be secured in a disarmed world.

American reluctance to seriously contemplate general disarmament is largely due to uncertainty about this point. If it became clear that a satisfactory solution of this issue is possible, many Americans may come to regard general disarmament as a highly desirable goal.

On the issue of how to secure the peace in a disarmed world, progress could probably be made reasonably fast, through nongovernmental discussions among Americans and Russians. *I believe that such discussions ought to be arranged through private initiative, but with the blessing of the administration.*

The Russians know very well that America is *not* ready seriously to contemplate general disarmament and this, to my mind, explains why, in spite of being strongly motivated for disarmament, the Russian government displays in its negotiations on this issue much the same attitude as does

the American government. As far as negotiations on disarmament are concerned, hitherto both governments have been mainly guided by the public relations aspect rather than by the substantive aspect of the issue.

The Soviet Union’s attitude might change overnight, however, if it became apparent that America was becoming seriously interested in disarmament.

The Russians are very much aware of the economic benefits they would derive from disarmament, and I believe that the Soviet Union would be willing to pay a commensurate price for obtaining it. It stands to reason that this should be so for the Soviet Union spends on defense an even larger fraction of her industrial output than America does.

America is at present committed to protect certain territories which are located in the geographical proximity of Russia. In the case of general disarmament, America would not be able to live up to any such commitments. Disarmament would therefore be politically acceptable to America only if it is possible for her to liquidate her present commitments—without too much loss of prestige and without seriously endangering the interests of the other nations involved.

Khrushchev seems to be very much aware of this. Therefore, if it came to serious negotiations on the issue of disarmament, and if it became manifestly necessary to reach a political settlement in order to permit America to liquidate her military commitments, then the Soviet Union might go a long way toward seeking an accommodation.

5.) General disarmament may, if we are lucky, eliminate war, but it would not end the rivalry between America and Russia.

It is a foregone conclusion that American efforts toward creating an orderly and livable world will be frustrated in Southeast Asia and Africa because of our failure to devise forms of democracy which would be viable in these regions of the world. The task of devising forms of democracy which would be suitable to the needs of such areas is not a task that the government can handle. Various forms of democracy may have to be devised which are tailor-made to fit the various areas. *A major private group could tackle and ought to tackle this problem.* If it is not solved, more and more underdeveloped nations may become dictatorships; some of them

may have a rapid succession of dictator after dictator and, in the end, the people may have to choose between chaos and communism.

It is a foregone conclusion that America’s efforts to raise the standard of living of underdeveloped nations may be frustrated in those areas where the birth rate is high, infant mortality is high, and there is little arable land left. Improvement in the standard of living will initially lead to a fall in infant mortality, and if the birth rate remains high, the population will shoot up so rapidly that economic improvements will not be able to catch up.

Our failure to develop biological methods of birth control, suitable for the needs of such areas, is responsible for this state of affairs. The development of such methods is not a task which the government can undertake. The government could not create research institutes which would attract scientists who are ingenious and resourceful enough to come up with an adequate solution. *A major private group could and should tackle this problem.*

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If it should turn out that it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which reasonable people could generally agree, and if these objectives could count on the all-out support of a sizable and dedicated minority, then I should be impelled to go further, and I would plan to go further along the following lines:

I would ask about fifteen distinguished scientists to serve as fellows of a council which might be called Council for Abolishing War or perhaps Council for a Livable World. The fellows (who are all scientists) would elect the board of directors, but membership on the board would not be restricted to scientists.

This council would, first of all, assemble a panel of political advisors, and then in close consultation with these advisors, it would formulate two sets of objectives. To the first set belong those objectives which cannot be attained at the present time through political action because it would take further inquiry, and perhaps even real research to know, in concrete terms, what needs to be done. To the second set belong those objectives which can be pursued through political action because it is clear what needs to be done.

The fellows of the council would



set up a research organization aimed at the pursuit of the first set of objectives, and they would elect the trustees of that organization. The fellows of the council would also set up a political organization aimed at the pursuit of the second set of objectives, and they would elect the board of directors of that organization. Because one of the major functions of the second organization would be to lobby, we may refer to it for our purposes as the lobby.

The council would hold hearings, perhaps one every four months, and would subsequently proclaim in detail the immediate political objectives it proposes to advocate. It would communicate these objectives, perhaps in the form of a series of pamphlets, to all those who are believed to be seriously interested. Those who regularly receive the communications of the council would be regarded as members of the movement, if they are willing *actively* to support *at least one* of the several specific objectives proclaimed by the council.

It seems to me that there is no need to enlist those who are interested as members of an organization. What one needs to create is not a membership organization, but a movement.

The articulate members of the movement would be expected to discuss the relevant issues with editors of their newspaper and various columnists and other opinion makers in their own community. They would be expected to write to, and in other ways keep in touch with, their congressman and the two senators of their own state.

One of the functions of the lobby would be to help the members of the movement clarify their own minds on the political objectives they wish actively to support.

The members of the movement would be regarded as pledged to vote in the primaries as well as in the elections. As far as federal elections are concerned, they would be pledged to cast their vote, *disregarding domestic issues*, solely on the issue of war and peace.

The members of the movement would be regarded as pledged annually to spend two per cent of their income on campaign contributions. The members would be asked to make out a check payable to the recipient of the campaign contribution but to mail that check to the Washington office of the lobby for transmission. In this manner the lobby would be in a po-

sition to keep track of the flow of campaign contributions.

Those in high income brackets may be left free to contribute three per cent after taxes rather than two per cent before taxes.

All members of the movement would be free to wear an emblem that would identify them as members of the movement, if they wish to do so.

Those who can not spend two per cent of their income on campaign contributions may regard themselves as supporters of the movement if they spend either one per cent of their income or \$100 per year, according to their preference. Such supporters of the movement may receive the advice and guidance of the lobby on the

same terms as the members of the movement.

So that each member of the movement may know where his contribution should go, in order to be most effective in furthering the political objectives which he has chosen to pursue, the lobby would keep in touch with each member. The lobby would keep the members informed about the particular contests for seats in Congress which are of interest to the movement; but it may advise one member to take an interest in one of these contests and another member to take an interest in another of these contests.

For covering the operating expenses of the lobby and the research organi-

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zation (which would be maintained independently from and operated parallel to the lobby), one would look to the members of the movement. Each year a certain group of the members would be asked by the lobby to contribute two per cent of their income to it, rather than to spend it for political contributions. One year this group might be composed of those whose names start with the letter "C." Another year it might be composed of those whose names start with the letter "R," etc.

The movement must not wield the power that it may possess crudely. People in Washington want to be convinced, they do not want to be bribed or blackmailed. He who gives consistently financial support to certain

key members of Congress, may evoke their lasting friendship and may count on their willingness to listen to him as long as he talks sense. He who talks to members of Congress, but does not talk sense, will not accomplish anything of lasting value, even if he temporarily sweeps some members of Congress off their feet by making huge political contributions to them.

There are many intelligent men in Congress who have insight into what goes on; the movement could help these men to have the courage of their convictions. There are others in Congress who are not capable of such insight; the only thing to do with them is not to return them to Congress, and to replace them with better men. This

may make it necessary to persuade better men to run in the primaries and to stand for election. To find such better men must be one of the main tasks of the movement, and the lobby must be prepared to help members of the movement to perform this task.

I did not come here to enlist any of you in such a movement or to launch such a movement. I came here to invite you to participate in an experiment that would show whether such a movement could be successfully launched.

First of all, I ask each of you to look into your own heart and try to discover whether you yourself would want to participate in a political movement of the kind described, provided the objectives—as formulated from time to time—appeal to you and you thought that the movement could be effective.

Those of you who wish to participate in the experiment are asked to show a copy of this speech to people in your home community who might be interested and to determine who of these would be likely to be part of a dedicated minority that would give all-out support to a movement of the kind I have described.

I would appreciate your writing me, as soon as possible, how many people you have talked to and how many of these and who of these (name and address), you think, could be counted upon.

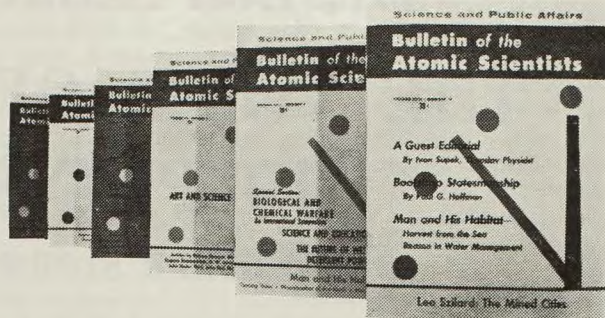
If the result of this experiment indicates that such a movement could get off the ground, provided it were started in the right way and on a sufficiently large scale, then the Council for Abolishing War would be constituted. Presumably the council would attempt to identify 25,000 individuals who would be willing to make campaign contributions in the amount of two per cent of their income. Presumably, if the council is successful in this, the fellows of the council would proceed to establish the lobby.

By the time the movement attains 150,000 members it would presumably represent about \$20 million per year in campaign contributions or \$80 million over a four year period.

Whether such a movement could grow further and come to represent not only a decisive amount in campaign contributions but also a significant number of votes, would then presumably depend on the future course of world events.



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Leo Szilard  
Hotel Dupont Plaza  
Washington 6, D. C.

Christmas 1961

## ARE WE ON THE ROAD TO WAR?

by Leo Szilard

For a number of years now, you have had an opportunity to observe how we, as a nation, respond to the actions of the Russians, and how the Russians respond to our responses. Those of you who have watched closely the course of events in the past six months may have been led to conclude that we are headed for an all-out war. I myself believe that we are, and that our chances of getting through the next ten years without war are slim.

I, personally, find myself in rebellion against the fate that history seems to have in store for us, and I suspect that some of you may be equally rebellious. The question is, what can you do?

War seems indeed to be inevitable, unless it is possible somehow to alter the pattern of behavior which America and Russia are exhibiting at present. You, as Americans, are not in a position to influence the Russian government; it follows that you would have to bring about a change in the attitude of the American Government which, in turn, may bring about a similar change in the attitude of the Russian Government.

It is conceivable that if a dedicated minority were to take effective political action, they could bring about the change in attitude that is needed. But such a minority can take effective action only if it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which it can unite.

I shall try to outline to you tonight a set of political objectives and you shall be the judges of how satisfactory these objectives may be.

Next, I would like to discuss with you what kind of political action it would take to alter the course of events; cause the present danger of war to recede, and to open the door to a constructive effort to abolish war.

To abolish war is a tall order, and I speak of it therefore with reluctance. It has been apparent, however, ever since the end of the war, that the bomb would pose a problem to the world for which there is no precedent and which cannot be solved short of abolishing war.

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Ever since the end of the war, the policies of the great powers have consistently followed the line of least resistance, and this line leads to an unlimited arms race.

There have been repeated attempts to stop the arms race by negotiating an agreement that would provide for some form of arms control. So far, all such attempts have failed, and each time they were followed by the continuation of the arms race, with renewed vigor.

Towards the end of the Eisenhower Administration, it was generally expected that the next administration would adopt a new approach to this problem and that a fresh attempt would be made to bring the arms race under control.

When Khrushchev was in New York last October, I tried to see him, in the hope of finding out how responsive he might be to such a new approach. I was told that they had scheduled fifteen minutes for me but, as it turned out,



the conversation went on for two hours. At that time, it was not known whether Kennedy or Nixon would get elected, and I started off the conversation by saying that no matter who is elected, the Government would try to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of stopping the arms race. Khrushchev answered--and he spoke in all seriousness--that he believed this also.

On November 25 of last year, I checked out of the hospital in New York, where I had been confined for over a year, took a taxi to the airport, and flew to Moscow to attend the 6th Pugwash Conference. I was accompanied by my wife, who is also my doctor, and I stayed on in Moscow for about a month beyond the end of the conference. I stayed on in Moscow in order to engage in private conversations with our Russian colleagues, because I knew from experience that only in private conversation is it possible to get anything across to them or to discover what they really believe to be true. None of our Russian colleagues brought up the issue of bomb tests in any of these conversations in Moscow, even though two years earlier some of them had been passionately interested in this issue. I found, however, an undiminished interest in far-reaching disarmament which would result in substantial savings. On one occasion, I had tea with Fedorov, the General Secretary of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with no one present except my interpreter. I had met Fedorov before and I always got along well with him. On this particular occasion, he spoke to me as follows:

"You must really believe me when I tell you that we want general disarmament. You have seen all this construction work going on in Moscow; it has been going on for many years; still we are not able to catch up with the housing shortage. If we had disarmament, we could not only solve this problem, but many of our other economic problems as well. Also, we could develop other nations on an unprecedented scale. So far, we are building only one hydro-electric dam in Africa--the Aswan Dam in Egypt; if we had disarmament, we could, and we would, build twenty such dams in Africa."

I tried to impress upon our Russian colleagues that the Kennedy Administration would make a serious effort to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of arms control, but that the new Administration would need time--six months and more than six months, perhaps--to find its bearings on this issue and to get organized to deal with it.

When I returned to this country in February, I decided to stay in Washington for a while.

In Washington, my friends told me that the Government was going to make a sincere effort to reach an agreement with Russia on the cessation of bomb tests and that a reasonable proposal would be made to the Russians on this issue. They would have liked to hear from me that Russia would be likely to accept such a proposal, but coming fresh from Moscow, I had serious doubts on this score.

The Cuban invasion took me by surprise. When I first heard about it, it was not clear, as yet, whether we were going to give air support to the invading Cuban exiles and whether we would, if necessary, send in the Marines also. My immediate reaction was that of alarm, for I believed that if we did any of these things, we would seriously risk war with Russia. I did not think that Russia would try to intervene in the Caribbean area. Nor did I think that the Russians would launch long-range rockets aimed at our cities. I thought, however, that Russia would make some military move elsewhere, perhaps in the Middle East.



In retrospect, it would seem that I was wrong, for Tom Slick of San Antonio, Texas recently disclosed, apparently on good authority, that, if America had openly intervened in Cuba at that point, Russia would have moved into West Berlin.

I would not venture to appraise just how close we came to an all-out war on the occasion of the Cuban incident. I am reasonably certain, however, that if our intervention in Cuba had been successful, this would have blocked for many years to come any possibility of reaching an agreement on arms control with Russia. Failure to reach an accommodation on the Berlin issue might, of course, produce the same result.

I would not entirely exclude the possibility of war over Berlin, but, to me, it seems more probable that this crisis will be resolved by some uneasy compromise, and that it will not lead to an all-out war. Russia may bring pressure on West Berlin, in order to promote any one of a number of her foreign policy objectives, but, on the larger issue, the issue of Germany, the true interest of America and Russia is the same. The true interest of both is to have Europe politically as stable as possible.

Neither Russia nor America really knows how to accomplish this goal. America may favor certain solutions and Russia may favor certain other solutions; still, it would be rather odd if America and Russia went to war with each other over the issue of what is the best solution for securing the peace in Europe.

I am convinced that the Berlin issue could be satisfactorily resolved by negotiations, but this conviction is based on the belief that there is something that the Russians want that we should be willing to give them, and that there is something that we want that the Russians should be willing to give us in return.

There are many people who do not share this belief. They hold that the Berlin issue was artificially created by Russia for the purpose of humiliating America, for breaking up NATO, and for converting West Germany into a Communist state.

Many people, probably the majority, believe that the Russians are very much like the Nazis; that they have concrete plans for bringing about, one way or another, our total defeat in Europe, and also for subjugating the whole world to their rule.

Many people have a black and white picture of the world; they believe that the nations fall into two classes: the peace-loving nations; and those who are not peace-loving. America, France and England, and generally speaking our allies, including Germany and Japan, are peace-loving nations. Russia and China are not peace-loving nations. Twenty years ago, the situation was somewhat different; at that time, Russia was a peace-loving nation, but Germany and Japan were not.

Many people believe that Russia, by supplying arms on a vast scale to the Chinese Communists, managed to take control of China. They recollect, further, that when American troops, fighting under the flag of the United Nations, crossed the 38th parallel, moved up across North Korea to the Yalu River, and destroyed the hydro-electric power plant which supplied Manchuria with electricity, all at once--and without any provocation--Chinese Communist hordes crossed the Yalu River and thus frustrated the efforts of the United Nations to unify Korea under free elections.

Many people believe that ever since the atomic bomb forced the unconditional surrender of Japan, America has unceasingly tried to rid the world



4 Leo Szilard, "Are We on the Road to War?"

of the bomb, but that all her efforts were frustrated by Russian intransigence.

When I listen to people who hold such views, I sometimes have the feeling that I have lived through all this before and, in a sense, I have. I was sixteen years old when the first World War broke out, and I lived at that time in Hungary. From reading the newspapers in Hungary, it would have appeared that, whatever Austria and Germany did was right and whatever England, France, Russia, or America did was wrong. A good case could be made out for this general thesis, in almost every single instance. It would have been difficult for me to prove, in any single instance, that the newspapers were wrong, but somehow, it seemed to me unlikely that the two nations located in the center of Europe should be invariably right, and that all the other nations should be invariably wrong. History, I reasoned, would hardly operate in such a peculiar fashion, and it didn't take long until I began to hold views which were diametrically opposed to those held by the majority of my schoolmates.

Many of my schoolmates regarded me as something of an oracle because I was able to cope with the mysteries of lower arithmetics which baffled them; some of them asked me one day quite early in the war who would lose the war. I said that I didn't know who would lose the war, but that I thought that I knew who ought to lose the war. I thought that Austria and Germany, as well as Russia, ought to lose the war. Since Austria and Germany fought on one side and Russia on the other side, it was not quite clear how this could happen. The fact is, of course, that it did happen.

I am not telling you this in order to impress you with how bright I am. Nobody at sixty can claim to be as bright as he was at sixteen, even though in most cases it is not the intelligence that deteriorates, but the character. The point I am trying to make is that even in times of war, you can see current events in their historical perspective, provided that your passion for the truth prevails over your bias in favor of your own nation.

After the war, when I lived in Berlin, a distinguished friend of mine, Michael Polanyi, asked me one day what I thought ought to be the rule of human conduct regulating the behavior of an individual in society. "Clearly," he said, "you cannot simply ask a man to be generous to other people, for if the other people are mean to him, and if he follows your rule, he will starve to death." "But," said Polanyi, "perhaps the rule ought to be 'Be 1 percent more generous to people than they are to you.'" This should be sufficient, he thought, because if everyone were to follow this rule, the earth would, step by step, turn into a livable place.

I told him that, to my mind, this would not work at all, because if two people behave the same way toward each other, each is bound to think that he is 30 percent more generous than the other. Clearly, the rule would have to allow for this bias. Perhaps if we were to stipulate as the rule of conduct, "Be 31 percent more generous to the others than they are to you," such a rule might work.

America and Russia are not following any such rule of conduct. Moreover, their bias greatly exceeds 30 percent.

Most Americans apply a yardstick to America's actions which is very different from the yardstick which they apply to Russia's actions. Whenever their bias in favor of their own nation gets into conflict with the truth, the odds are that the bias will prevail. As a result of this, they are not capable of seeing current events in their historical perspective. They may well



realize that we are in trouble, but they cannot correctly diagnose the cause of the trouble and therefore, they are not in a position to indicate what the right remedy might be.

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The people who have sufficient passion for the truth to give the truth a chance to prevail, if it runs counter to their bias, are in a minority. How important is this "minority?" It is difficult to say at this point, for, at the present time, their influence on governmental decisions is not perceptible.

If you stay in Washington, you may gain some insight into the manner in which important governmental decisions come about; you may get a feel of what kind of considerations enter into such decisions, and what kind of pressures are at work.

With President Kennedy, new men moved into the Administration. Many of them fully understand the implications of what is going on and are deeply concerned. But, they are so busy trying to keep the worst things from happening, on a day-to-day basis, that they have no time to develop a consensus on what the right approach would be, from the long-term point of view.

There are also a number of men in Congress, particularly in the Senate, who have insight into what is going on and who are deeply concerned, but they lack the courage of their convictions. They may give a lucid analysis of the trouble in private conversations and then at some point or other, they will say: "Of course, I could not say this in public."

In Washington, wisdom has no chance to prevail at this point.

---

Life Magazine printed an article about me in September which said that I was in Washington trying to find out if there was a market for wisdom. Thereupon, I received a flood of letters from colleges and universities inviting me to give lectures. Most people get some pleasure out of hearing themselves talk, and so do I, yet I did not see much point in going around the country giving talks, if all I had to say was that there was no market for wisdom. Therefore, I declined all these invitations; that is, I declined them all, until Brandeis University invited me to attend a Special Convocation and to receive an honorary doctor's degree. At that point, my vanity got the better of me, and I accepted. At Brandeis, I spoke at dinner informally to the Trustees and Fellows of the University, and this was my closest contact with the grass roots since I moved to Washington--if indeed, you may regard the Trustees and Fellows of Brandeis as grass roots.

I told them at Brandeis that I thought we were in very serious trouble; people asked me what they could do about it, and I had no answer to give.

---

Is there, indeed, anything that these people--or for that matter I, myself--could do that would make sense?

When I got back to Washington, I started to think about this, and I believe it will be best now if I simply recite to you how my thoughts developed from this point on.

The first thought that came to my mind was that--in cooperation with others--I could try to set up an organization in Washington--a sort of lobby, if you will--which would bring to Washington, from time to time, scholars and scientists who see current events in their historical perspective. These men would speak with the sweet voice of reason, and our lobby could see to it that



they shall be heard by people inside the Administration and also by the key people in Congress.

The next thing that occurred to me was that these distinguished scholars and scientists would be heard, but that they would not be listened to, if they were not able to deliver votes.

Would they be listened to if they were able to deliver votes?

The minority for which they speak might represent perhaps ten percent of the votes, and ten percent of the votes alone would not mean very much, just as the sweet voice of reason alone would not mean very much. Still, the combination of ten percent of the votes and the sweet voice of reason might turn out to be an effective combination. And, if the minority for which these men speak were sufficiently dedicated to stand ready not only to deliver votes, but also to make substantial political contributions, then this minority would be in a position to set up the most powerful lobby that ever hit Washington. The problem which the bomb poses to the world cannot be solved except by abolishing war, and nothing less will do. But first of all, we must back away from the war to which we have come dangerously close.

Could such a dedicated minority agree not only on the long-term political objectives which need to be pursued in order to attain a livable world but also on the immediate political objectives which must be pursued in the next couple of years in order to make the present danger of war recede to the point where attention can be focused on the task of abolishing war?

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I do not propose to say here much about the long-term objectives, but I want to discuss now a set of immediate political objectives on which a dedicated minority could perhaps unite. Please keep in mind, however, that this is just a first try.

The issue of bomb tests and the issue of bomb shelters are peripheral issues; they are more the symptoms of the trouble we are in than the causes of the trouble.

I would not want to say that a foolish large-scale shelter program might not also become the cause of serious trouble. But still I think that political pressure should not be focused on this issue, and the same holds for the issue of bomb tests.

The central issue which will face the Kennedy Administration is, whether America shall try to retain her strategic striking forces as a deterrent, or whether she shall retain them merely as protection. This issue has been brought into focus by the current Berlin crisis.

Currently, voices are heard demanding that free access to West Berlin shall be defended at all cost. Spokesmen of the Administration emphasize that, if necessary, we would drop the bomb on Russia. We are told that our atomic striking forces are far superior to those of Russia, that, at this time, Russia has only 50 long-range rockets and only 150 long-range bomber planes, and that we have many more than that, and many people believe that this threat deters Russia from contesting our rights in Berlin.

---

If we intend to drop our bombs on Russia in case of war and expect Russia to drop her bombs on us, so that both countries would be wholly devastated, then our threat to drop bombs on Russia is tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide.

The threat of murder and suicide is not a believable threat, in the



context of the Berlin conflict, and it would not be a believable threat in the context of any other similar conflict.

The threat of dropping bombs on Russia, in case of war, would be a believable threat however if America's strategic striking forces were able to cripple most, if not all, of Russia's rocket and bomber bases by one sudden single blow, and if it were America's intention to "strike first" in case of war.

Opinions differ on how successful such a first strike against bases would be today, and whether the Russian counterblow would demolish twenty, ten, one, or none of our cities.

Be that as it may, the Administration will have to decide whether the strategic striking forces of America shall be maintained in the long run at a level where they would have an adequate first strike capability, and whether America should adopt a "first strike against bases if necessary" policy.

Let us pause for a moment to examine what such a policy would involve. It would involve, first of all, a great increase in the projected number of solid fuel long-range rockets, and the development of more powerful hydrogen warheads for these rockets. This would be necessary because the Russians would, of course, harden their rocket bases.

Secondly, it would involve the manufacture of a large number of rockets that would function as decoys, in order to neutralize the anti-missile missiles, by means of which the Russians may be expected to defend their rocket bases.

Further, since we could not expect to destroy every single Russian base and submarine in a first strike, we would have to embark on a major development program in order to have adequate anti-missile missiles available for the defense of our cities.

And lastly, we would be more or less forced to embark on a shelter program involving an annual expenditure of perhaps \$20 billion. The shelters would have to protect not only against fall-out, but also against heat and blast. The problem of getting the people into the shelters at the right time would probably offer no major obstacle, since if we plan to strike first, the Government should be in a position to get the people to take shelter at the right time.

Only if such defensive measures were included in the program would the maintenance of a first strike against bases capability permit America to retain the bomb as a deterrent.

To me it seems conceivable that America's strategic striking forces could be boosted to the level where, for a limited period of time, they would be capable of an adequate first strike against bases. It is not likely, however, that they could be maintained indefinitely at such a level. Presumably periods when America has a first strike capability would alternate with periods when she does not have such a capability. And if there were a major international crisis during one of the periods when we have a first strike capability, the Government would be under strong pressure to start a preventive war.

The decision to start a preventive war would always be a hard decision for any President to take, particularly since he would never be quite certain just how many of our own cities would be hit. But in certain circumstances, his hand could be forced by a commander of an overseas strategic base, or a submarine capable of launching rockets.

If a commander of a strategic base or a submarine were to drop bombs on,



say, three Russian cities, then the Russians would be expected to strike back with all they have, and the President would have no choice but to order an all-out first strike against the bases of Russians.

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A "first strike if necessary" policy would mean an atomic arms race, with the sky as the limit. I do not believe that America could be made secure by trying to keep ahead in such an arms race, and I would be in favor of resisting the adoption of such a policy, if necessary through vigorous political action.

In deciding against such a policy, we must, however, recognize, that if America renounces the "first strike if necessary" policy, she loses the deterrent effect of her strategic striking forces. For, clearly, if these forces are not capable of a first strike against Russian bases, then any threat that America would attack Russia with bombs, in case of war, would be tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide and would, therefore, not be believable.

If America renounces the first strike policy, then the strategic striking forces of America could thereafter function only as protection. If these forces are arranged in such a manner that a sudden attack on them could not substantially reduce their ability to strike a major counter-blow, then these forces may be looked upon as protection against the possibility that America might be attacked with bombs.

A clear policy decision to the effect that America is going to maintain an invulnerable second strike, but would not adopt a "first strike if necessary" policy would leave open the door to an agreement on arms control. This is important, because an agreement on arms control (providing for far-reaching disarmament) is a necessary first step towards abolishing war.

An agreement on arms control would have to involve, however, not only Russia but also China, and it is not likely that negotiations including China may get under way within the next twelve months. It might very well be, therefore, that in the immediate future America would have to take unilateral steps in order to reduce the present danger of an all-out war.

---

Such unilateral steps are not adequate substitutes for negotiated agreements, and they can carry us only part of the way, but still there are some unilateral steps which need to be taken at the present time. I propose to discuss with you at this point what unilateral steps America could and should take at the present time.

(1). I believe that America could and should make unilaterally two crucially important policy decisions and that she should proclaim these decisions.

First of all, America should proclaim that she would not resort to any strategic bombing of cities or bases (either by means of atomic bombs or conventional explosives), except if American cities or bases are attacked with bombs, or if there is an unprovoked attack with bombs on cities or bases of one of America's allies.

Further, America should make a second policy decision and should proclaim this decision. In order to understand the meaning and importance of this second decision, it is necessary to consider the following:



Soon after the war, the Soviet Union proposed that the atomic bomb be outlawed. This could take the form of a unilateral pledge, given by each atomic power, that it would not resort to the use of atomic bombs either for the purpose of attacking cities or bases or as a tactical weapon to be used against troops in combat.

Recently Sulzberger discussed with Khrushchev the possibility of unilateral pledges, renouncing the use of the bomb. Khrushchev said on this occasion that if there were a war, and if at first only conventional weapons were used, subsequently the side which is about to lose the war would find it impossible to abide by its pledge and would resort to the use of the bomb.

This brings out, what I believe to be the crux of the issue, that today it might still be possible to resist force with force, but the objective of the use of force can no longer be victory. The objective can only be to exact a price.

As long as force is used at all, an all-out war which neither side wants, can be avoided only if both sides recognize that the use of force must not be aimed at victory, or anything approaching victory.

Keeping this point in mind, America could and should proclaim that if, in case of war, she were to use atomic bombs against troops in combat, she would do so only on her own side of the pre-war boundary. America would be bound by this pledge in case of war, as long as Russia imposes a similar restraint on her conduct of the war. Manifestly, this type of use of atomic bombs would be a defensive operation.

Such a pledge would be no less clear than the simple pledge renouncing the use of the bomb, but it would be much easier to keep and therefore it would be a more believable pledge. And if neither side aims at anything approaching victory, then the pledge would greatly reduce the danger of an all-out war.

When I discussed this issue in Germany three years ago, the people there said that if the ground forces of the allies were pushed back to the Rhine, and America used atomic bombs against troops in combat between the Rhine and the Oder Neisse line, many West German cities might be destroyed by American bombs. I do not know to what extent West German cities could be spared by a judicious tactical use of atomic bombs by American forces, but I do know that if America were to use bombs beyond the pre-war boundary, West German cities would be destroyed by Russian bombs.

(2). America could and should resolve that atomic bombs and the means suitable for their delivery, which are supplied by her and which are stationed in Europe, shall remain in the hands of American military units which are under American command, rather than be placed under the control of NATO. As long as we are committed to defend Western Europe, there is no valid argument for turning over bombs to the control of other Western European nations.

Germany is going to put increasingly strong pressure on the United States Government to turn over such equipment to NATO control, and I would be in favor of counterbalancing any pressure by bringing political pressure to bear on the Government.

(3). Nothing is gained by America winning meaningless battles in the cold war and a change of attitude in this regard is urgently needed. Take the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, for instance. This organization has at present no function whatsoever, and if it is maintained in existence at all, it should be maintained as an exercise in cooperation among the nations.

The first director of this Agency, Sterling Cole, is an American, and his



term expired recently. Since next to America, the Soviet Union is the most important atomic power, we could have proposed that the next director of the Agency be a Russian. Instead, we proposed a Swede, who was not acceptable to the Russians, and since we had the votes we were able to win a victory in a meaningless battle in the cold war.

This "victory" has reduced the chances of finding some useful function for this Agency, because the Russians resent being pushed around and there is no way for us to force them to play ball in this Agency.

I believe that it would be important for the Government to reach a major policy decision, and for the President to issue an Executive Order against fighting meaningless battles in the Cold War. Some political action in support of such an Executive Order might be necessary.

(4). We have a cultural exchange program with the Russians but their State Department and our State Department are playing a game of "if you hit our scientists, we shall hit your scientists." Accordingly, our State Department imposes senseless travel restrictions on our Russian colleagues who visit this country. These travel restrictions are not aimed at the safeguarding of any secrets, but are merely one way of hitting back at travel restrictions which the Soviet Government occasionally imposes on American scientists who travel about in Russia.

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The Russians have opened up their country to tourist travel to a considerable extent, and if we wish to encourage this development, as we probably ought to, then American tourists should not be given spying assignments. Tourists make poor spies, and we are losing more than we are gaining by trying to use them as spies.

I believe that representations ought to be made, at as high a level of the Administration as is necessary:

(a) for the Secretary of State to find some other assignment in the State Department for those who have, up till now, handled the East-West Cultural Exchange Program;

(b) for the President to issue an Executive Order to the CIA directing it to refrain from approaching those who go to Russia as tourists.

(5). Not every issue can be solved by Congress passing a law, and there are borderline issues where political action alone can bring no solution because the specific knowledge is lacking of how to go about a solution. The issue of general disarmament seems to be such a borderline issue.

I believe that, at the present time, little could be gained by bringing pressure on the Administration to enter into formal negotiations with Russia on the issue of General Disarmament, because--as they say, "You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

I believe that no substantial progress will be made towards disarmament until Americans and Russians first reach a meeting of the minds on the issue of how the peace may be secured in a disarmed world.

American reluctance to seriously contemplate general disarmament is largely due to uncertainty about this point. If it became clear that a satisfactory solution of this issue is possible, many Americans may come to regard general disarmament as a highly desirable goal.

On the issue of how to secure the peace in a disarmed world, progress could probably be made reasonably fast through non-governmental discussions



among Americans and Russians. I believe that such discussions ought to be arranged through private initiative, but with the blessing of the Administration.

It does not seem likely that the newly created Disarmament Agency will be in a position to mobilize the imagination and resourcefulness which is required, and I believe that it may be necessary for a major private group to help them out or to prod them along--as the case may be. This may or may not require political action of one sort or another.

The Russians know very well that America is not ready seriously to contemplate general disarmament and this, to my mind, explains why, in spite of being strongly motivated for disarmament, the Russian Government displays in its negotiations on this issue much the same attitude as does the American Government. As far as negotiations on disarmament are concerned, hitherto both governments have been mainly guided by the public relations aspect rather than by the substantive aspect of the issue.

The Soviet Union's attitude might change overnight, however, if it became apparent that America was becoming seriously interested in disarmament.

The Russians are very much aware of the great economic benefits they would derive from disarmament, and I believe that the Soviet Union would be willing to pay a commensurate price for obtaining it. It stands to reason that this should be so. The Soviet Union spends on defense a much larger fraction of her industrial output than America does.

America is at present committed to protect certain territories which are located in the geographical proximity of Russia. In the case of general disarmament, America would not be able to live up to any such commitment. Disarmament will, therefore, be politically acceptable to America only if it is possible for her to liquidate her present commitments--without too much loss of prestige and without seriously endangering the interest of the other nations involved.

Khrushchev seems to be very much aware of this. Therefore, it is possible that if it came to serious negotiations on the issue of disarmament, and if it became manifestly necessary to reach a political settlement in order to permit America to liquidate her military commitments, then the Soviet Union would go a long way towards seeking an accommodation.

The so-called Berlin Crisis, which centers around the commitments which America made to West Berlin, might very well be a case in point.

(6). General disarmament will, if we are lucky, eliminate war, but it will not end the rivalry between America and Russia.

It is a foregone conclusion that American efforts towards creating an orderly and livable world will be frustrated in Southeast Asia and Africa because of our failure to devise forms of democracy which would be viable in these regions of the world. The task of devising forms of democracy which would be suitable to the needs of such areas is not a task that the Government can handle. Various forms of democracy may have to be devised which are tailor-made to fit the various areas. A major private group could tackle and ought to tackle this problem. If it is not solved, more and more underdeveloped nations will become dictatorships; some of them may have a rapid succession of dictator after dictator and, in the end, the people may have to choose between Chaos and Communism.



of living of underdeveloped nations may be frustrated in those areas where the birth rate is high, infant mortality is high, and there is little arable land left. Improvement in the standard of living will initially lead to a fall in infant mortality, and if the birth rate remains high, the population will shoot up so rapidly, that economic improvements will not be able to catch up.

Our failure to develop methods of birth control, suitable for the needs of such areas, is responsible for this state of affairs. The development of such methods is not a task which the Government can undertake. The Government could not create Research Institutes which would attract scientists who are ingenious and resourceful enough to come up with an adequate solution. The amount of money which would be involved is not much, and a major private group could and should tackle this problem.

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If it should turn out that it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which reasonable people could generally agree, and if these objectives could count on the all-out support of a sizable minority--admittedly a very big "if"--then I should be inclined to go further, and I would go further along the following lines:

I would ask seven to twelve distinguished scientists to form a Council, which might be called the Council for Abolishing War or perhaps better, Council for a Liveable World. This Council would, first of all, assemble a panel of political advisers, whose identity would be public knowledge and formulate in close consultations with those advisers two sets of objectives. To the first set belong those objectives which cannot be attained at the present time through political action because it would take further inquiry, and perhaps even research, to know, in concrete terms, what needs to be done. To the second set belong those objectives which can be pursued through political action, because it is clear what needs to be done.

The members of the Council would set up a Research Organization aimed at the pursuit of the first set of objectives, and they would serve as the Trustees of that organization.

The members of the Council would also set up a political organization aimed at the pursuit of the second set of objectives, and they would serve as the Board of Directors for that organization. Because one of the functions of the second organization would be to pursue political objectives we may refer to it for our purposes here as "The Lobby".

It seems to me that there is no need to create a membership organization and to enlist those who are interested as members of such an organization. What one needs to create is not a membership organization, but a Movement.

The Board of the Lobby would hold hearings, perhaps once every four months, and would subsequently proclaim in detail the immediate political objectives it proposes to support. It would communicate these objectives perhaps in the form of a series of pamphlets, to all those who are believed to be seriously interested. Those who regularly receive the communications of the Board would be regarded as members of the Movement, if they agree with the general aims pursued by the Board, and if they are willing actively to support at least one of the several specific objectives proclaimed by the Board.

The articulate members of the Movement would be expected to discuss the



relevant issues with the editors of their newspapers and various columnists and other opinion makers in their own community. They would be expected to write to, and in other ways keep in touch with, their Congressman and the two Senators of their own State. Also each articulate member would be expected to keep in touch with at least one key member of the House or the Senate.

One of the main functions of the Lobby would be to help the members of the Movement clarify their own minds on the political objectives they wish actively to support and to help arrange appointments for those members who come to Washington to see Congressmen, Senators and certain key members of the Administration.

The members of the Movement would be regarded as pledged to vote in the primaries as well as in the elections. As far as federal elections are concerned, they would be pledged to cast their vote, disregarding domestic issues, solely on the issue of war and peace. The members of the Movement would be further regarded as pledged annually to spend 2 per cent of their income on political contributions.

So that each member of the Movement may know where his contribution should go in order to be most effective in furthering the political objectives which he has chosen to pursue, the Lobby will keep in touch with each member. The Lobby would keep the members informed not only in general about the particular contests for seats in Congress which are of interest to the Movement, but it may advise one member to take an interest in one of these contests and another member to take an interest in another of these contests.

This does not mean the Lobby would explicitly endorse anyone running for office. It may be assumed that if the importance of a given contest is brought to the attention of a member, the member will have no difficulty figuring out for himself which of the two opposite candidates for office he would want to support.

For covering the operating expenses of the Lobby and the Research Organization (which would be maintained independently and operated parallel to the Lobby), one would look to the members of the Movement. Each year a certain group of the members would be asked by the Board of the Lobby or the Trustees of the Research Organization to contribute for 2 per cent of their income to them, rather than to spend it for political contributions. One year this group might be composed of those whose name starts with the letter "P" and another year it might be composed of those whose name starts with the letter "C", etc. etc.

The influence of the Movement would be greatly enhanced if the Lobby were able to say not only how many votes it represents, in toto, but also how many votes it represents in each state and in each congressional district. So that the Lobby may not make false representations, concerning the votes it may be able to deliver, the Board shall from time to time ask all those who regularly receive its communications, to say which of the political objectives proclaimed by the Board they propose to support and if they intend to perform with respect to those objectives as members of the Movement are expected to perform.

The Movement must not wield the power that it may possess crudely. People in Washington want to be convinced, they do not want to be bribed or blackmailed. He who gives consistently financial support, to certain key members of Congress, may evoke their lasting friendship and may count on their willingness to listen to them, as long as they talk sense. He who talks to members of Congress, but does not make sense, will not accomplish anything



14 Leo Szilard, "Are We on the Road to War?"

of lasting value, even if he temporarily sweeps some members of Congress off their feet by making huge political contributions to them.

There are many intelligent men in Congress who have insight into what goes on. The Movement could help these men to have the courage of their convictions. There are others in Congress who are not capable of such insight. The only thing to do with them is not to return them to Congress, and to replace them with better men. This may make it necessary to persuade better men to run in the primaries and to stand for election. To find such better men, must be one of the tasks of the Movement, and the Lobby must be prepared to help the members of the Movement to perform this task.

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I did not come here to enlist any of you in such a Movement or to launch such a Movement. I came here to invite you to participate in an experiment that ought to show whether such a movement could be successfully launched.

First of all, I ask each of you to look into your own heart and try to discover whether you yourself would want to participate in a political movement of the kind described, provided the objectives -- as formulated from time to time appealed to you and you thought that the movement could be effective.

Next, you may want to ask others -- within this University community -- whether they might not wish to participate in the experiment also.

Those of you who wish to participate in the experiment are asked to show a copy of my speech to people in your home community who might be interested and to determine which of these would be likely to form part of a dedicated minority that would give all-out support to a movement of the kind I have described.

I would appreciate your writing me in about four to six weeks to how many people you have talked and how many of these and who of these (name and address), you think, could be counted upon.

Those to whom you talk in your home community should not go and recruit still others. They may, however, put you into contact with others who might be interested, and you will be then in the position to evaluate their interest and to report back.

This experiment is meant to be based on the communities centered on Harvard University, Swarthmore College, Western Reserve University, the University of Chicago, Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, Reed College, and the University of Oregon.

If enough of you collaborate in this experiment, with luck we might be in a position to know within two months whether a movement of the kind I have described could get off the ground.

Those of you who participate in this experiment may need to have a copy of this speech, and we can discuss later on just how I can get a copy to you.

If the result of this experiment indicates that such a movement could get off the ground, then perhaps one would want to start the Movement with talks, in front of large student audiences across the country, from coast to coast. If within the next 12 months one could find 20 thousand students who would go all-out in support of the Movement, and if each student would, directly or indirectly, bring ten other people into the Movement, then the Movement could rapidly attain 200,000 members. This would represent about 20 million dollars per year in political contributions, or 80 million dollars for a four-year



period, and this is probably as much as one would want to have.

Whether such a movement could grow further and could come to represent one or two million votes would then probably depend on the future course of world events.

The End



Leo Szilard  
Hotel Dupont Plaza  
Washington 6, D.C.

Archives  
November 14, 1961

"ARE WE ON THE ROAD TO WAR?"

by Leo Szilard

Ladies and gentlemen, I am here under false pretenses, and since I am about to be found out, I might as well confess at once, and throw myself upon your mercy. I am not here to deliver the kind of lecture which you may expect from me. I came here in order to invite those of you who are adventurous to participate in an experiment that might show that I am all wrong. And, it might well be that something of a more serious nature is at issue also.

For a number of years now, you have had an opportunity to observe how we, as a nation, respond to the actions of the Russians, and how the Russians respond to our responses. Those of you who have watched the course of events in the past six months may have been led to conclude that we are headed towards an all-out war. I myself believe that we are and that our chances of getting through the next ten years without war are slim.

I, personally, find myself in rebellion against the fate that history seems to have in store for us, and I suspect that some of you may be equally rebellious. The question is, what can you do?



War would indeed seem to be inevitable, unless it is possible somehow to alter the pattern of behavior which America, as well as Russia, is exhibiting at present. You, as Americans, are not in a position to influence the behavior of the Russian Government. It follows that you would have to bring about an adequate change in the attitude of the American Government which, in turn, may bring about a similar change in the attitude of the Russian Government.

It is conceivable, that if a rebellious minority were to take effective political action, they could bring about such a change in the attitude of the American Government. But such a minority could take effective action only if it were possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which they may enthusiastically agree.

I shall try to outline to you today a set of political objectives and you shall be the judges of how satisfactory it may be.

Next, I would like to discuss with you what kind of political action it would take to attain political objectives which would alter the course of events; cause the present danger of war to recede, and open the door to a constructive effort to abolish war.

To abolish war is a tall order and I speak of it with considerable reluctance. It has been apparent, however, ever



since the end of the war, that the bomb would pose a problem to the world for which there is no precedent, and the truth is that it cannot be solved short of abolishing war. As E. B. White once said, "It might be advisable to compromise with the Russians, but it is not advisable to compromise with the truth."

Ever since the end of the war, the policies of the great powers have consistently followed the line of least resistance, and this line leads to an unlimited arms race.

There have been repeated attempts to stop this arms race by negotiating an agreement that would provide for some form of arms control. So far, all such attempts have failed, however, and each time they were followed by the continuation of the arms race, with renewed vigor.

Towards the end of the Eisenhower Administration, it was generally expected that the next administration would adopt a new approach to this problem, and that a fresh attempt would be made to bring the arms race under control.

When Khrushchev was in New York last October, I tried to see him in the hope of finding out how responsive he might be to such a new approach. I was told that they had scheduled fifteen minutes for me but, as it turned out, the conversation went on for two hours. At that time, it was not known whether



Kennedy or Nixon would get elected, and I started off the conversation by saying that no matter who gets elected, the American Government would try to reach an understanding with Russia on the stopping of the atomic arms race. Khrushchev answered -- and he spoke in all seriousness -- that he believed this also.

On November 25 of last year, I checked out of the hospital where I had been confined for over a year, took a taxi to Idlewild Airport, and flew to Moscow in order to attend the Pugwash Conference. I was accompanied by my wife, who is also my doctor, and I stayed on in Moscow for about a month beyond the end of the conference. I stayed on in Moscow because I wanted to engage in private conversations with our Russian colleagues, since I knew from experience that only in private conversation is it possible to get anything across to them or to discover what they really believe to be true. None of our Russian colleagues brought up the issue of bomb tests in any of these conversations, even though, two years earlier, some of them had been passionately interested in this issue. I found, however, a strong interest in far-reaching disarmament which would lead to substantial savings. On one occasion, I had tea with Feodorov, at present Secretary General of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, at his home, with no one present except my interpreter. I had met Feodorov before and I always got along with him well. On this particular occasion, he spoke to me about as follows:



"You must really believe me when I tell you that we want general disarmament. You have seen all this construction work going on in Moscow, it has been going on for many years; still we are not able to catch up with the housing shortage. If we had general disarmament, we could not only solve this problem, but many of our other economic problems as well. Also, we could develop other nations on an unprecedented scale. So far, we are building only one hydro-electric dam in Africa - the Aswan Dam in Egypt. If we had disarmament, we could and we would build twenty such dams in Africa."

I tried to impress upon our Russian colleagues, as did some of the other Americans who participated in the Pugwash Conference, that the Kennedy Administration would make a serious effort to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of arms control, but that the new Administration would need time - six months and more than six months, perhaps - to find its bearings on this issue, and to get organized to deal with it.

When I returned to this country in February, I decided to stay in Washington for a while.

In Washington, some of my friends told me that the Government was going to make a sincere effort to arrive at an agreement with Russia on the cessation of bomb tests and that a reasonable proposal would be made to Russia on this issue. They would have liked to hear from me that I thought Russia



would be likely to accept such a proposal, but coming fresh from Moscow, I had serious doubts on this score.

The Cuban invasion took me by surprise. When I first heard about it, it was not clear, as yet, whether we were going to give the invading Cuban exiles air support and whether we would, if necessary, send in the Marines also. My immediate reaction was that of alarm, for I believed that if we did any of these things, there would be an acute danger of war with Russia. I did not think that Russia would try to intervene in the Caribbean area; this I did not think Russia would be in a position to do. Nor did I think that the Russians would launch long-range rockets aimed at our cities. I thought, however, that Russia would make some military move elsewhere, perhaps in the Middle East.

In retrospect, it would seem that I was wrong, for (at the Strategy of Peace Conference held recently in Warrenton, Virginia) Tom Slick of San Antonio, Texas, recently related, on what he believed was good authority, that, if America had intervened in Cuba with her own armed forces, Russia would have moved into West Berlin.

I would not venture to appraise just how close we have been to an all-out war on the occasion of the Cuban incident. (I am neither in the position to appraise how close President Kennedy came to giving air support to the invading Cuban exiles, nor to predict how Kennedy would have responded to a Russian



countermove involving West Berlin.) I am reasonable certain, however, that if our intervention in Cuba had been successful, this would have blocked for many years to come any possibility of reaching an agreement on arms control with the Soviet Union that would put an end to the atomic arms race. Failure to reach an accommodation on the Berlin issue might, of course, produce the same kind of block.

I would not entirely exclude the possibility of war over Berlin but, it seems more probable that this crisis will be resolved by some uneasy compromise than that it will lead to an all-out war. Russia may bring pressure on West Berlin, in order to promote any one of a number of her foreign policy objectives but, on the larger issue, the issue of Germany, the true interest of America and Russia is very similar. The true interest of both is to have Europe politically as stable as possible.

Neither Russia nor America really knows how to accomplish this goal. America may favor certain solutions and Russia may favor certain other solutions; still, it would be rather odd if America and Russia went to war with each other over the issue of what may be the best solution for securing the peace in Europe.

I, personally, am convinced that the Berlin issue could be satisfactorily solved by negotiations, but this conviction is based on my belief that there is something that the Russians



want that we should be willing to give them, and that there is something that we want that the Russians should be willing to give us in return.

There are many people who do not accept this assumption; they believe that the Berlin issue was artificially created by Russia for the purpose of humiliating us, for breaking up the NATO alliance, and for converting West Germany, as well as East Germany, into a Communist state, that is subservient to Russia.

Many people, probably the majority, believe that the Russians are very much like the Nazis; that they have plans not only for bringing about, one way or another, our total defeat in Europe, but also for subjugating the whole world to their rule.

Many people have a black and white picture of the world; they believe that the nations fall into two classes: the peace-loving nations, and those who are not peace-loving. America, France and England, and generally speaking our allies, including Germany and Japan, are peace-loving nations. Russia and China are not peace-loving nations. Twenty years ago, the situation was somewhat different; at that time, Russia was a peace-loving nation, but Germany and Japan were not.

Many people believe that Russia, by rendering military assistance to the Chinese Communists, made it possible for them illegally to take control of China. And, American troops fighting under the flag of the United Nations, had hardly crossed



the 38th parallel in Korea, moved up to the Yalu River and destroyed the hydro-electric power plant which supplied Manchuria with electricity, when Chinese Communist hordes crossed the Yalu River into North Korea and frustrated the efforts of the United Nations to unify Korea under free elections.

Many people believe that ever since the atomic bomb forced the unconditional surrender of Japan, America has unceasingly tried to rid the world of the bomb, but that all her efforts were frustrated by Russian intransigence. Many people believe that, in putting forth the Baruch Plan, America made a generous and reasonable offer for atomic disarmament, and that for reasons which are not understandable, Russia wantonly rejected this offer. They believe that at the London conference America made reasonable proposals for the stopping of the arms race, and that these were rejected out of hand by Russia. In Geneva, America put forward the so-called open sky proposal, which was meant to prevent a surprise attack, and this proposal was also wantonly rejected by Russia.

When I listen to people who hold such views, I sometimes have the feeling that I have lived through all this before and, in a sense, I have. I was sixteen years old when the first World War broke out, and I lived at that time in Hungary. From reading the newspapers in Hungary, it would have appeared that, whatever Austria and Germany did was right, and whatever England, France, Russia, or America did was wrong. A good case could be made out



for this general thesis, in almost every single instance.

(Thus, newspapers were able to show, for instance, that the war was forced upon Austria and Germany, by the treachery of England, and that Germany had no choice, and was fully justified in instituting the unrestricted submarine warfare.) It would have been difficult for me to prove, in any single instance, that the newspapers were wrong, but somehow, it seemed to me unlikely that the two nations located in the center of Europe should be invariably right, and that all the other nations should be invariably wrong. History, I reasoned, would hardly operate in such a peculiar fashion, and thereafter, it didn't take long until I began to hold views which were diametrically opposed to those held by the majority of my schoolmates.

Many of my schoolmates regarded me as something of an oracle because I was able to cope with the mysteries of lower arithmetics which baffled them, and one of them asked me quite early in the war who I thought would lose the war. I said that I didn't know who would lose the war, but that I knew who ought to lose the war. I thought that Austria and Germany, as well as Russia, ought to lose the war. Since Austria and Germany fought on one side, and Russia on the other, it was not quite clear how this could happen. The fact is, of course, that it did happen.

I am not telling you this in order to impress you with how bright I am. Nobody at sixty can claim to be as bright as



he was at sixteen, even though in most cases it is not the intelligence that deteriorates, but the character. The point I am trying to make is that even in times of war, you can see current events in their historical perspective, provided that your passion for the truth prevails over your bias in favor of your own nation.

After the war when I lived in Berlin, a friend of mine, Michael Polanyi, asked me one day what I thought ought to be the rule of human conduct, regulating the behavior of an individual in society. "Clearly," he said, "you cannot simply ask a man to be generous to other people, for if the other people are mean to him, and if he follows your rule, he will starve to death." "But," said Polanyi, "perhaps the rule ought to be 'Be 1% more generous to people than they are to you.'" This should be sufficient, he thought, because if everyone were to follow this rule, the earth would, step by step, become a livable place.

I told him that, to my mind, this would not work at all, because the yardstick people apply to their own actions is not the same as the yardstick which they apply to other people's actions. If two people behave the same way toward each other, each may think that he was 30% more generous to the other than the other was to him, and the rule would have to allow for this bias. Perhaps if we were to stipulate as the rule of conduct



"Be 31% more generous to others than they are to you," such a rule might work.

Neither America nor the Soviet Union is following any such rule of conduct. Moreover, their bias greatly exceeds 30%.

Most Americans apply a yardstick to America's actions which is very different from the yardstick which they apply to Russia's actions. Whenever their bias in favor of their own nation gets into conflict with the truth, the odds are that the bias will prevail. As a result of this, they are not capable of seeing current events in their historical perspective. They may well realize that we are in trouble, but they cannot correctly diagnose the trouble and therefore, they are not in a position to see what the right remedy might be.

The people who have sufficient passion for the truth to give the truth a chance to prevail, if it runs counter to their bias, are in a minority. They alone are capable of seeing current events in their historical perspective.

How important is this "minority?" It is difficult to say at this point for, at the present time, their influence on governmental decisions is not perceptible.

If you stay in Washington, you may gain some insight into the manner in which important governmental decisions come about, and you may get a feel of what kind of considerations enter into such decisions, and what kind of pressures are at



work. With President Kennedy, new men moved into the Administration, and many of them fully understand the implications of what is going on, and are deeply concerned. They are so busy trying to keep the worst things from happening, on a day-to-day basis, that they have no time to develop a consensus on what the right approach would be from the long term point of view.

There are also a number of men in Congress, particularly in the Senate, who have insight into what is going on, and who are deeply concerned, but they do not have the courage of their convictions. They may give an admirable analysis of the trouble in private conversations, then, at some point or other, they will say: "Of course, I could not say this in public."

In Washington, wisdom has no chance to prevail at this point.

Life Magazine printed an article about me in September which said that I was in Washington trying to find out if there is a market for wisdom. Thereupon, I received a flood of letters from colleges and universities inviting me to give lectures. Most people get some pleasure out of hearing themselves talk, and so do I, yet I did not see any point in going around the country giving talks, if all I had to say was, that there is no market for wisdom. Therefore, I declined all these invitations; that is, I declined them all, until Brandeis University invited me to attend a Special Convocation and to receive an honorary doctor's degree. At that point, my vanity got the better of me, and I accepted. At Brandeis, I spoke at dinner



informally to the Trustees and Fellows of the University, and this was my closest contact with the grass roots since I moved to Washington - if indeed, you may regard the Trustees and Fellows of Brandeis as grass roots.

I told them at Brandeis that I thought we were in serious trouble; people asked me what there was that they could do about it, and I had no answer to give.

Is there, indeed, something that these people - or for that matter I, myself - could do that would make sense?

When I got back to Washington, I started to think about this, and I believe it will be best now if I simply recite to you how my thoughts developed from this point on.

The first thought that came to my mind was that - in cooperation with others - I could try to set up an organization in Washington - a sort of lobby, if you will - which would bring to Washington, from time to time, scholars and scientists who see current events in their historical perspective. These men would speak with the sweet voice of reason, and our lobby could see to it that they shall be heard by the people within the Administration, and also by the key people in Congress.

The next thing that occurred to me was that these distinguished scholars and scientists would be heard, but that they would not be listened to, if they were unable to deliver the votes.



Would they be listened to if they were able to deliver the votes?

The minority for which they speak might represent perhaps ten per cent of the votes, and ten per cent of the votes alone would not mean very much, just as the sweet voice of reason alone would not mean very much. Still, the combination of ten per cent of the votes and the sweet voice of reason could turn out to be a formidable combination. And, if the minority for which these men speak, were sufficiently aroused to stand ready not only to deliver votes but also to make substantial political contributions, then it would indeed be in a position to set up the most powerful lobby that ever hit Washington.

The problem which the bomb poses to the world cannot be solved except by abolishing war, and nothing less will do, but first of all, we must back away from the war to which we have come uncomfortably close. Could such an aroused minority agree on the political objectives which must be attained in order to make the present danger of war recede to the point where people could begin to focus their attention on the task of abolishing war?

I propose tentatively to sketch out for you what these political objectives might be.

The issue of bomb tests and the issue of bomb shelters are peripheral issues; they are more symptoms of the trouble we are in, than the causes of this trouble.



To me, personally, it seems that shelter building may be the correct answer to the wrong question, and I would not want to say that a foolish large-scale shelter program might not also become the cause of serious trouble. But still I would say that political pressure should not be focused on this issue, and the same holds for the issue of bomb tests.

(1). The central issue which will face the Kennedy Administration is whether America shall try to retain her strategic striking forces as a deterrent, or whether she is going to retain them merely as an insurance. This issue has been brought into focus by the present Berlin crisis.

At present, voices are heard demanding that free access to West Berlin shall be defended at all cost. Spokesmen of the Administration emphasize that, if necessary, we would drop the bomb on Russia. We are told that our atomic striking forces are far superior to those of Russia, that, at this time, Russia has only 50 long-range rockets and only 150 long-range bomber planes, and that we have many more than that. Therefore, many people believe that the superiority of our strategic striking forces may deter Russia from disregarding what we claim to be our rights in Berlin.

If we intend to drop our bombs on Russia in case of war, and expect Russia to drop her bombs on us, so that both countries would be wholly devastated, then our threat to drop bombs on Russia is tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide.



A threat of murder and suicide is not a believable threat, in the context of the Berlin conflict, and it would not be a believable threat in the context of any similar conflict.

The threat of dropping bombs on Russia, in case of war, would be a believable threat only if America's strategic striking forces were able to cripple most, if not all, of Russia's rocket and bomber bases by one sudden single blow, and if it were America's intention to strike first, in case of war.

Opinions differ on how successful such a first strike would be today, and whether the Russian counterblow would demolish none, one, ten or twenty of our cities.

Be that as it may, the Administration will have to decide in the next few years whether the strategic striking forces of America shall be maintained at a level where they would have an adequate first strike capability, and whether America should adopt a "first strike if necessary" policy.

Let us pause for a moment to examine what such a policy would involve. It would involve, first of all, a great increase in the number of solid fuel long-range rockets, and the development of more powerful hydrogen warheads for these rockets. This would be necessary because the Russians would, of course, harden their rocket bases.



Secondly, it would involve the manufacture of a large number of rockets that would function as decoys, in order to neutralize the anti-missile missiles, by means of which the Russians may be expected to defend their rocket bases.

Further, since we could not expect to destroy every single Russian base and submarine in a first strike, we would have to embark on a major development program in order to have adequate anti-missile missiles available for the defense of our cities.

And lastly, we would be more or less forced to embark on an adequate shelter program involving an annual expenditure of perhaps \$20 billion. The shelters would have to protect not only against fall-out, but also against heat and blast. The problem of getting the people into the shelters at the right time would offer no major obstacle, since if we plan to strike first, the Government may be in a position to give adequate warning and to get the people to take shelter at the right time.

Only if such measures of defense are included in the program, would the maintenance of a first strike capability permit America to retain the bomb as a deterrent.

It is conceivable that America's strategic striking forces could be boosted to the level where, for a limited period of time, they would be capable of an adequate first strike. It is not likely that they could be maintained indefinitely at such a level. Presumably periods when America has a first strike



capability would alternate with periods when she does not have such a capability. And if there were a major international crisis during a period when our strategic forces have a first strike capability, the Government would be presumably under strong pressure to start a preventive war.

The decision to start a preventive war would always be a very hard decision for any President to take, particularly since he would never be quite certain just how many of our cities would be hit. But in certain circumstances, his hand could be forced by a commander of an overseas strategic base, or a submarine capable of launching rockets.

"A general," Enrico Fermi once said, "is a man who takes chances; usually, he takes a fifty-fifty chance; if he is successful on three successive occasions, he is regarded as a great general."

If a commander of a strategic base or a submarine were to drop bombs on, say, three Russian cities, then - in the absence of any clear understanding between America and Russia of how to cope with such an unauthorized attack - the Russians would be expected to strike back with all they have, and the President would have no choice but to order an all-out first strike against the bases of the Russians.

A "first strike if necessary" policy would mean an atomic arms race, with the sky as the limit, and I do not believe that America could be made secure by trying to keep



ahead in such an arms race. I would be in favor of resisting the adoption of such a policy, if necessary through political action.

In deciding against such a policy, we must, however, recognize, that if America renounces the "first strike if necessary" policy, she loses the deterrent effect of her strategic striking forces. For, clearly, if the forces are not capable of a first strike against Russian bases, then any threat that, in case of war, America would attack Russia with bombs, would be tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide and would therefore be not believable.

If America renounces the first strike policy, then the strategic striking forces of America could thereafter function only as an insurance. If these forces are arranged in such a manner that a sudden attack on them could not substantially reduce their capability to strike a major counterblow, then they could be looked upon as an insurance against the possibility that Russia might attack America with bombs.

A clear policy decision to the effect that America is going to maintain an invulnerable second strike (but would not try to maintain her strategic striking forces at a level where they could knock out in a first strike most of Russia's bases) would open the door to an agreement on arms control. This does not mean, however, that there would be a good prospect for the conclusion of such an agreement in the near future.



It is true that if America and Russia were to retain no more than, say, fifteen large hydrogen bombs each, and if the bases from which these bombs might be launched were invulnerable, America and Russia each could be reasonably sure that it would not be attacked by the other; neither of them could be assumed to be willing to sacrifice fifteen of their cities for the sake of attaining any of the controversial political objectives. An agreement on arms control would have to involve, however, not only Russia, but also China, and, as far as cities go, China is very much less vulnerable than either America or Russia.

In the present circumstances, it might very well be that in the immediate future, we ought to look to unilateral steps that America might take, in order to have the danger of war recede, rather than to an agreement on arms control.

What are, then, the unilateral steps that America could and should take?

(2). I believe that America could and should make two important unilateral pledges.

First of all, America should unilaterally proclaim that she would not resort to any strategic bombing of cities or bases (either by means of atomic bombs or conventional explosives), except if American cities or bases are attacked by Russia, or if there is an unprovoked attack on cities or bases of one of America's allies.



Further, America should make a second unilateral pledge.

In order to elucidate the meaning and relevance of this second pledge, I must first say the following:

Soon after the war, the Soviet Union proposed that the atomic bomb be outlawed. Such an outlawing of the bomb could take the form of a unilateral pledge, given by each atomic power, that it would not resort to the use of atomic bombs, either for the purpose of attacking cities or bases, or as a tactical weapon to be used against troops in combat.

In discussing with Sulzberger the possibility of unilateral pledges, renouncing the "first use" of the bomb, Khrushchev stressed that if there were a war, and if at first only conventional weapons were used, subsequently the side which is about to lose the war would find it impossible to abide by its pledge and would resort to the use of the bomb.

What Khrushchev said brings out what I believe to be the crux of the issue. The crux of the issue is, that today it might still be possible to resist force with force, but the objective of the use of force can no longer be victory. The objective can only be to exact a price (and of course, in order to exact a price, one must be willing to pay a price).

As long as force is used at all, the danger that we may have an all-out war which neither side wants, can be reduced only if it is generally recognized that the use of



force must not be aimed at victory, or anything approaching victory.

If this is generally recognized, then it may be possible for America unilaterally to reduce the danger that the use of force would end in all-out destruction. To this end, America could and should proclaim that if, in case of war, she were to use atomic bombs against troops in combat, she would do so only on her own side of the pre-war boundary. Obviously, this type of use of atomic bombs would be a purely defensive operation, and it might be a rather effective defensive operation at that. (It would be even better if America were additionally to pledge not to use atomic weapons within a twenty-mile zone on her own side of the pre-war boundary.) America would be bound by this pledge in case of war, as long as Russia would impose a similar restraint on her conduct of the war.

Such a pledge would be no less clear and unequivocal than the simple pledge of "no first use" but it would be very much easier to keep and therefore it would be a more believable pledge. This pledge would impose certain restrictions on the conduct of the war, but if neither side would aim at anything approaching victory, then the pledge would greatly reduce the danger of an all-out war.

When I discussed this issue in Germany, three years ago, the people there voiced the fear that if the ground forces



of the western allies were pushed back to the Rhine, and America used atomic bombs against troops in combat between the Rhine and the Oder Neisse line, many West German cities would be destroyed by American bombs. I do not know to what extent West German cities could be spared by a judicious tactical use of atomic bombs by American forces, but I do know that if America were to use bombs beyond the pre-war boundary, West German cities would be destroyed by Russian bombs.

(I also know - as the result of discussions of this sort - that when the West Germans say that West Berlin must be protected at all cost, they draw the line at sacrificing West German cities. I for one don't blame them for refusing to contemplate with equanimity the possibility of having their cities demolished by bombs.)

(3). America could and should unilaterally resolve that atomic bombs and the means suitable for their delivery, which are supplied by her and which are stationed in Europe, shall remain in the hands of American military units which are under American command, rather than be placed under the control of NATO. As long as we are committed to defend Western Europe, there is no valid argument for turning over bombs to the control of other Western European nations.



There may be increasingly strong political pressure on the United States Government, on the part of Germany, to turn over such equipment to NATO or to German control, and I would be in favor of bringing domestic political pressure to bear on the Government, if necessary, to counter-balance the pressure coming from Germany.

(4). Nothing is gained by America winning meaningless battles in the cold war and a change of attitude in this regard is urgently needed. Take the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, for instance. This organization has at present no function whatsoever, and if it is maintained in existence at all, it should be maintained as an exercise in cooperation among the nations and in the hope that sooner or later some function for the organization may be found.

The first director of this Agency was an American whose term recently expired. Since next to America, the Soviet Union is the most important atomic power, we ought to have proposed that a Russian be the next director of the Agency. Instead, we proposed a Swede who was not acceptable to the Russians and since we had the votes were able to win a victory in a meaningless battle in the cold war.

This "victory" has reduced the chances of finding some useful function for this Agency. The Russians resent being pushed around in this Agency and there is no way for us to



force them to play ball if they don't want to.

I believe that it would be important for the Govern-  
ment to reach a major policy decision, and for the President  
to issue an Executive Order against fighting meaningless  
battles in the Cold War. Political action in support of such  
an Executive Order would be desirable.

(5). We have a cultural exchange program with the Russians but their State Department and our State Department are playing a game of "if you hit our scientists, we'll hit your scientists." Accordingly, our State Department imposes senseless travel restrictions on our Russian colleagues who visit this country. These travel restrictions are not aimed at the safeguarding of any secrets, but are merely one way of hitting back at travel restrictions which the Soviet Government rightly or wrongly imposes on American scientists who travel about in Russia.

The Russians have opened up their country to travel to a considerable extent, and if we wish to encourage this development, as we probably ought to, then American tourists should not be approached by the CIA with spying assignments. Tourists make poor spies, and we would be losing more than we would be gaining by trying to use them as spies.

I believe that representations ought to be made, at as high a level of the Administration as is necessary, for the purpose of exploring the possibility:



(a) for the Secretary of State to find some other assignment in the State Department for those who have, up till now, handled the East-West Cultural Exchange Program;

(b) for the President to issue an executive order to the CIA to refrain from approaching those who are about to go to Russia as tourists.

(6). Not every issue can be solved by Congress passing a law and there are borderline issues where political action alone can bring no solution, because the knowledge is lacking of how to go about a solution. The issue of general disarmament seems to be such a borderline issue.

I believe that at the present time little could be accomplished by bringing pressure on the Administration to enter into formal negotiations with Russia on the issue of General Disarmament because - as they say "You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

I believe that no substantial progress will be made towards disarmament, until Americans and Russians first reach a meeting of the minds on the issue of how the peace may be secured in a disarmed world.

American reluctance to seriously contemplate general disarmament is largely due to uncertainty about this point. If it became clear that a satisfactory solution of this issue is possible, many Americans might come to regard general disarmament as a highly desirable goal.



On the issue of how to secure the peace in a disarmed world, progress could probably be made through serious non-governmental discussions among Americans and Russians. I believe that such discussions ought to be arranged through private initiative, but with the blessing of the Administration.

It does not seem likely that the newly created Disarmament Agency will be in a position to mobilize the imagination and resourcefulness which is required, and I believe that it may be necessary for an influential private group to help them out or to prod them along - as the case may be. This may or may not require political action of one sort or another.

The Russians know very well that America is not ready seriously to contemplate general disarmament and this, to my mind, explains why, in spite of being strongly motivated toward general disarmament, the Soviet Union displays in its negotiations on this issue much the same attitude as does the American Government. So far as negotiations on general disarmament are concerned, hitherto both governments have been mainly guided by the public relations aspect, rather than by the substantive aspect, of the issue.

The Soviet Union's attitude in this regard might change over night, however, if it became apparent that America was becoming seriously interested in general disarmament.



The Russians are very much aware of the great benefits they would derive from general disarmament, and I believe that the Soviet Union would be willing to pay a commensurate price for obtaining it. It stands to reason that this should be so. The Soviet Union spends on defense a much larger fraction of her industrial output than America does. Eliminating the cost of armaments would enable the Soviet Union to solve many of her domestic economic problems, and also to extend her influence, by giving economic aid to other nations on an unprecedented scale.

(Ever since America has ringed Russia with bomber bases in the post-war period, the average Russian has been keenly aware of the dangers of the arms race. Most Russians were much earlier aware of this danger than most Americans. There is less fear in Russia of economic dislocations that might be caused by moving too fast towards disarmament than there is in America. And, above all, the whole concept of general disarmament fits in with the set of values generally prevailing in the Soviet Union.)

America is at present committed to protect certain territories which are located in the geographical proximity of Russia. In the case of general disarmament, America would not be able to live up to any such commitment. General disarmament will, therefore, be politically acceptable to America



only if it is possible for her to liquidate her present commitments - without loss of prestige and without seriously endangering the interest of the other nations involved.

Khrushchev seems to be very much aware of this. Therefore, it is likely that if it came to serious negotiations on the issue of general disarmament, and if it became manifestly necessary to reach a political settlement in order to permit America to liquidate her military commitments, then, under its present leadership, the Soviet Union would go a long way towards seeking an accommodation. The so-called Berlin crisis, which centers around the commitments which America made to West Berlin, might very well be a case in point.

(7). General disarmament, if we are lucky, will eliminate war, but it will not end the rivalry between America and Russia.

It is a foregone conclusion that American efforts towards creating an orderly and livable world will be frustrated in Southeast Asia and Africa because of our failure to devise forms of democracy which would be viable in these regions of the world. The task of devising forms of democracy which would be suitable to the needs of such areas is not a task that the Government could handle. Various forms of democracy may have to be devised which are tailor-made to fit the various areas. An influential private group could tackle and ought to tackle this problem. If it is not solved, more and



more underdeveloped nations will become dictatorships; some of them may have a rapid succession of dictator after dictator and, in the end, the people will have to choose between Chaos and Communism.

It is a foregone conclusion that America's efforts to raise the standard of living of underdeveloped nations will be frustrated in those areas where the birth rate is high, infant mortality is high, and there is little arable land left. Improvement in the standard of living will initially lead to a fall in infant mortality, and if the birth rate remains high, the population will shoot up so rapidly, that economic improvements will not be able to catch up.

Our failure to develop methods of birth control, suitable for the needs of such areas, is responsible for this state of affairs. The development of such methods is not a task which the Government could undertake. The Government could not create an Institute which would attract the kind of scientists who are ingenious and resourceful enough to come up with an adequate solution of the problem. The amount of money which would be involved is not much, and a major private group could and should tackle this problem.

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If it should turn out that it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which reasonable people could generally agree, and if these could count on the all-out



support of a sizable minority - admittedly a very big "if" - then I should be inclined to go further and I would go further along the following lines:

I would ask seven to twelve distinguished scientists to form a Council - call it, if you wish, Council for Abolishing War. This Council could function as the Board of Directors for a Lobby, which would have a staff of full-time employees. The Council (in close consultation with a panel of political advisors whose identity would be public knowledge) would, from time to time, formulate the political objectives that are to be pursued by the Lobby.

The directives issued by the Council would be communicated - perhaps in the form of a series of pamphlets - to all those whom the Council has reason to believe may be seriously interested.

It seems to me that there ought to be no attempt to create a membership organization and to enlist those who are interested as members of such an organization. What one needs to create is not a membership organization, but a Movement - a Movement for Abolishing War.

Those who regularly receive the communications of the Council would be regarded as members of this Movement, provided that they spend two percent of their income in support of the Movement. Only a small fraction of this amount would



go to the Council and would be used for covering the operating expenses of the Lobby. The rest of it would be made up of the political contributions made directly by the individual involved.

So that the members of the Movement may know where their political contributions should go in order to be most effective, they would be pledged to keep in close touch on this score with the Lobby. The Lobby would keep them informed about the key contests for seats in Congress, and the members should have no difficulty in figuring out where their contributions should go, even if the Lobby may not explicitly endorse anyone running for office.

The members of the Movement who are articulate would be expected to keep in touch not only with their Congressmen and the Senators of their own states, but, also, each with at least one key member of the House or the Senate. Above all, the articulate members of the Movement would be expected to discuss the relevant issues with the editors of their newspapers and various columnists, and other opinion makers, in their own community. They would be pledged to vote in the primaries as well as in the elections. And they would be pledged to cast their vote - disregarding domestic issues - solely on the issue of war and peace.



The influence of the Lobby would be greatly enhanced if it were able to say not only how many votes it represents, in toto, but also how many votes it represents in each state and in each congressional district. So that the Lobby may not make false representations, concerning the votes it may be able to deliver, the Council shall from time to time ask all those who regularly receive its communications, to inform the Council if they disagree with the political objectives formulated by the Council, or if, for any other reason, they do not intend to perform, as members of the Movement are expected to perform.

The Lobby must not wield the power that it may possess crudely. People in Washington want to be convinced, they do not want to be bribed or blackmailed. He who gives consistently financial support, to certain key members of Congress, may evoke their lasting friendship and may count on their willingness to listen to them, as long as they talk sense. He who talks to members of Congress, but does not make sense, will not accomplish anything of lasting value, even if he temporarily sweeps some members of Congress off their feet by making huge political contributions to them.

There are many intelligent men in Congress who have insight into what goes on. The Lobby could help these men to have the courage of their convictions. There are others in Congress who are not capable of such insight. The only thing



to do with them is not to return them to Congress, and to replace them with better men. This may make it necessary to persuade better men to run in the primaries and to stand for election. To find such better men must be one of the tasks that the Movement must pursue, and the Lobby must be prepared to help the members of the Movement to perform this task.

I did not come here to enlist you in such a Movement or to launch such a Movement, I came here to invite you to participate in an experiment that ought to show whether such a movement could be successfully launched.

First of all, I want each of you to look into his own heart and try to discover whether he himself would be likely to be an enthusiastic member of such a movement, if the political objectives had his wholehearted support, and if he thought that the movement could be effective.

Secondly, I should like to ask those of you, who are willing to participate in the experiment, to try to see during the Christmas vacation how many people you might find in your own community who would be likely to participate in such a Movement - at least to the extent of pledging to contribute two percent of their total income.

If enough of you collaborate in such an experiment, with luck we might be able to appraise, after Christmas, whether or not such a movement could get off the ground.



In order to have a sufficiently large sample for this experiment, I shall speak, within the ten days allotted for the purpose, at the Harvard Law School Forum, at Swarthmore, at the University of Chicago, and at Western Reserve University. The audiences may vary between a few hundred and a few thousand.

Those of you who are willing to participate in this experiment may need to have a copy of this speech, and we can discuss later on just how I can get a copy to you.

If the result of this experiment indicates that such a movement could get off the ground, then one might arrange for talks in front of large student audiences. If one could find fifty thousand students who would go all-out in support of this Movement, and if each such student would, directly or indirectly, bring in his home community ten other people into the Movement, then the Movement would attain five hundred thousand members within twelve months. This would represent about fifty million dollars per year in political contributions, or two hundred million dollars over a four-year period. This is probably as much as one would want to have.

Whether such a movement could grow further and could come to represent one or two million votes would then probably depend on the future course of world events.



Ladies and gentlemen, even though I may have done poorly, I have done my best. Now it is up to you to do your worst. I have had my say, and it is time for the cross-examination to begin. Thank you.



corrected

Leo Szilard  
Hotel Dupont Plaza  
Washington 6, D. C.

28 December  
~~November 15, 1961~~

ARE WE ON THE ROAD TO WAR?  
by Leo Szilard

For a number of years now, you have had an opportunity to observe how we, as a nation, respond to the actions of the Russians, and how the Russians respond to our responses. Those of you who have watched closely the course of events in the past six months may have been led to conclude that we are headed for an all-out war, I myself believe that we are, and that our chances of getting through the next ten years without war are slim.

I, personally, find myself in rebellion against the fate that history seems to have in store for us, and I suspect that some of you may be equally rebellious. The question is, what can you do?

War seems indeed to be inevitable, unless it is possible somehow to alter the pattern of behavior which America and Russia are exhibiting at present. You, as Americans, are not in a position to influence the Russian government; it follows that you would have to bring about a change in the attitude of the American Government which, in turn, may bring about a similar change in the attitude of the Russian Government.

It is conceivable that if a dedicated minority were to take effective political action, they could bring about the change in attitude that is needed. But such a minority can take effective action only if it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which it can unite.

I shall try to outline to you tonight a set of political objectives and you shall be the judges of how satisfactory these objectives may be.

Next, I would like to discuss with you what kind of political action it would take to alter the course of events; cause the present danger of war to recede, and to open the door to a constructive effort to abolish war.

To abolish war is a tall order, and I speak of it therefore with reluctance. It has been apparent, however, ever since the end of the war, that the bomb would pose a problem to the world for which there is no precedent and which cannot be solved short of abolishing war.

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Ever since the end of the war, the policies of the great powers have consistently followed the line of least resistance, and this line leads to an unlimited arms race.

There have been repeated attempts to stop the arms race by negotiating an agreement that would provide for some form of arms control. So far, all such attempts have failed, and each time they were followed by the continuation of the arms race, with renewed vigor.



2, Leo Szilard, "Are We On the Road to War?"

Towards the end of the Eisenhower Administration, it was generally expected that the next administration would adopt a new approach to this problem and that a fresh attempt would be made to bring the arms race under control.

When Khrushchev was in New York last October, I tried to see him, in the hope of finding out how responsive he might be to such a new approach. I was told that they had scheduled fifteen minutes for me but, as it turned out, the conversation went on for two hours. At that time, it was not known whether Kennedy or Nixon would get elected, and I started off the conversation by saying that no matter who is elected, the Government would try to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of stopping the arms race. Khrushchev answered--and he spoke in all seriousness--that he believed this also.

On November 25 of last year, I checked out of the hospital in New York, where I had been confined for over a year, took a taxi to the airport, and flew to Moscow to attend the 6th Pugwash Conference. I was accompanied by my wife, who is also my doctor, and I stayed on in Moscow for about a month beyond the end of the conference. I stayed on in Moscow in order to engage in private conversations with our Russian colleagues, because I knew from experience that only in private conversation is it possible to get anything across to them or to discover what they really believe to be true. None of our Russian colleagues brought up the issue of bomb tests in any of these conversations in Moscow, even though two years earlier some of them had been passionately interested in this issue. I found, however, an undiminished interest in far-reaching disarmament which would result in substantial savings. On one occasion, I had tea with Fedorov, the General Secretary of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, with no one present except my interpreter. I had met Fedorov before and I always got along well with him. On this particular occasion, he spoke to me as follows:

"You must really believe me when I tell you that we want general disarmament. You have seen all this construction work going on in Moscow; it has been going on for many years; still we are not able to catch up with the housing shortage. If we had disarmament, we could not only solve this problem, but many of our other economic problems as well. Also, we could develop other nations on an unprecedented scale. So far, we are building only one hydro-electric dam in Africa--the Aswan Dam in Egypt; if we had disarmament, we could, and we would, build twenty such dams in Africa."

I tried to impress upon our Russian colleagues that the Kennedy Administration would make a serious effort to reach an understanding with Russia on the issue of arms control, but that the new Administration would need time--six months and more than six months, perhaps--to find its bearings on this issue and to get organized to deal with it.

When I returned to this country in February, I decided to stay in Washington for a while.



In Washington, my friends told me that the Government was going to make a sincere effort to reach an agreement with Russia on the cessation of bomb tests and that a reasonable proposal would be made to the Russians on this issue. They would have liked to hear from me that Russia would be likely to accept such a proposal, but coming fresh from Moscow, I had serious doubts on this score.

The Cuban invasion took me by surprise. When I first heard about it, it was not clear, as yet, whether we were going to give air support to the invading Cuban exiles and whether we would, if necessary, send in the Marines also. My immediate reaction was that of alarm, for I believed that if we did any of these things, we would seriously risk war with Russia. I did not think that Russia would try to intervene in the Caribbean area. Nor did I think that the Russians would launch long-range rockets aimed at our cities. I thought, however, that Russia would make some military move elsewhere, perhaps in the Middle East.

In retrospect, it would seem that I was wrong, for Tom Slick of San Antonio, Texas recently disclosed, apparently on good authority, that, if America had openly intervened in Cuba at that point, Russia would have moved into West Berlin.

I would not venture to appraise just how close we came to an all-out war on the occasion of the Cuban incident. I am reasonably certain, however, that if our intervention in Cuba had been successful, this would have blocked for many years to come any possibility of reaching an agreement on arms control with Russia. Failure to reach an accommodation on the Berlin issue might, of course, produce the same result.

I would not entirely exclude the possibility of war over Berlin, but to me, it seems more probable that this crisis will be resolved by some uneasy compromise, and that it will not lead to an all-out war. Russia may bring pressure on West Berlin, in order to promote any one of a number of her foreign policy objectives, but, on the larger issue, the issue of Germany, the true interest of America and Russia is the same. The true interest of both is to have Europe politically as stable as possible.

Neither Russia nor America really knows how to accomplish this goal. America may favor certain solutions and Russia may favor certain other solutions; still, it would be rather odd if America and Russia went to war with each other over the issue of what is the best solution for securing the peace in Europe.

I am convinced that the Berlin issue could be satisfactorily resolved by negotiations, but this conviction is based on the belief that there is something that the Russians want that we should be willing to give them, and that there is something that we want that the Russians should be willing to give us in return.



4, Leo Szilard, "Are We on the Road to War?"

There are many people who do not share this belief. They hold that the Berlin issue was artificially created by Russia for the purpose of humiliating America, for breaking up NATO, and for converting West Germany into a Communist state.

Many people, probably the majority, believe that the Russians are very much like the Nazis; that they have concrete plans for bringing about, one way or another, our total defeat in Europe, and also for subjugating the whole world to their rule.

Many people have a black and white picture of the world; they believe that the nations fall into two classes: the peace-loving nations, and those who are not peace-loving. America, France and England, and generally speaking our allies, including Germany and Japan, are peace-loving nations. Russia and China are not peace-loving nations. Twenty years ago, the situation was somewhat different: at that time, Russia was a peace-loving nation, but Germany and Japan were not.

Many people believe that Russia, by supplying arms on a vast scale to the Chinese Communists, managed to take control of China. They recollect, further, that when American troops, fighting under the flag of the United Nations, crossed the 38th parallel, moved up across North Korea to the Yalu River, and destroyed the hydro-electric power plant which supplied Manchuria with electricity, all at once--and without any provocation--Chinese Communist hordes crossed the Yalu River and thus frustrated the efforts of the United Nations to unify Korea under free elections.

Many people believe that ever since the atomic bomb forced the unconditional surrender of Japan, America has unceasingly tried to rid the world of the bomb, but that all her efforts were frustrated by Russian intransigence.

When I listen to people who hold such views, I sometimes have the feeling that I have lived through all this before and, in a sense, I have. I was sixteen years old when the first World War broke out, and I lived at that time in Hungary. From reading the newspapers in Hungary, it would have appeared that, whatever Austria and Germany did was right and whatever England, France, Russia, or America did was wrong. A good case could be made out for this general thesis, in almost every single instance. It would have been difficult for me to prove, in any single instance, that the newspapers were wrong, but somehow, it seemed to me unlikely that the two nations located in the center of Europe should be invariably right, and that all the other nations should be invariably wrong. History, I reasoned, would hardly operate in such a peculiar fashion, and it didn't take long until I began to hold views which were diametrically opposed to those held by the majority of my schoolmates.

Many of my schoolmates regarded me as something of an oracle because I was able to cope with the mysteries of lower arithmetics which baffled them; some of them asked me one day quite early in the war who would lose the war. I said that I didn't know who would lose the war, but that I thought that I knew



who ought to lose the war. I thought that Austria and Germany, as well as Russia, ought to lose the war. Since Austria and Germany fought on one side, and Russia on the other side, it was not quite clear how this could happen. The fact is, of course, that it did happen.

I am not telling you this in order to impress you with how bright I am. Nobody at sixty can claim to be as bright as he was at sixteen, even though in most cases it is not the intelligence that deteriorates, but the character. The point I am trying to make is that even in times of war, you can see current events in their historical perspective, provided that your passion for the truth prevails over your bias in favor of your own nation.

After the war, when I lived in Berlin, a distinguished friend of mine, Michael Polanyi, asked me one day what I thought ought to be the rule of human conduct regulating the behavior of an individual in society. "Clearly," he said, "you cannot simply ask a man to be generous to other people, for if the other people are mean to him, and if he follows your rule, he will starve to death." "But," said Polani, "perhaps the rule ought to be 'Be 1 percent more generous to people than they are to you.'" This should be sufficient, he thought, because if everyone were to follow this rule, the earth would, step by step, turn into a livable place.

I told him that, to my mind, this would not work at all, because if two people behave the same way toward each other, each is bound to think that he is 30 percent more generous than the other. Clearly, the rule would have to allow for this bias. Perhaps if we were to stipulate as the rule of conduct, "Be 31 percent more generous to the others than they are to you," such a rule might work.

America and Russia are not following any such rule of conduct. Moreover, their bias greatly exceeds 30 percent.

Most Americans apply a yardstick to America's actions which is very different from the yardstick which they apply to Russia's actions. Whenever their bias in favor of their own nations gets into conflict with the truth, the odds are that the bias will prevail. As a result of this, they are not capable of seeing current events in their historical perspective. They may well realize that we are in trouble, but they cannot correctly diagnose the cause of the trouble and therefore, they are not in a position to indicate what the right remedy might be.

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The people who have sufficient passion for the truth to give the truth a chance to prevail, if it runs counter to their bias, are in a minority. How important is this "minority?" It is difficult to say at this point, for, at the present time, their influence on governmental decisions is not perceptible.

If you stay in Washington, you may gain some insight into the manner in which important governmental decisions come about; you may get a feel of



what kind of considerations enter into such decisions, and what kind of pressures are at work.

With President Kennedy, new men moved into the Administration. Many of them fully understand the implications of what is going on and are deeply concerned. But, they are so busy trying to keep the worst things from happening, on a day-to-day basis, that they have no time to develop a consensus on what the right approach would be, from the long-term point of view.

There are also a number of men in Congress, particularly in the Senate, who have insight into what is going on and who are deeply concerned, but they lack the courage of their convictions. They may give a lucid analysis of the trouble in private conversations and then at some point or other, they will say: "Of course, I could not say this in public."

In Washington, wisdom has no chance to prevail at this point.

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Life Magazine printed an article about me in September which said that I was in Washington trying to find out if there was a market for wisdom. Thereupon, I received a flood of letters from colleges and universities inviting me to give lectures. Most people get some pleasure out of hearing themselves talk, and so do I, yet I did not see much point in going around the country giving talks, if all I had to say was that there was no market for wisdom. Therefore, I declined all these invitations; that is, I declined them all, until Brandeis University invited me to attend a Special Convocation and to receive an honorary doctor's degree. At that point, my vanity got the better of me, and I accepted. At Brandeis, I spoke at dinner informally to the Trustees and Fellows of the University, and this was my closest contact with the grass roots since I moved to Washington--if indeed, you may regard the Trustees and Fellows of Brandeis as grass roots.

I told them at Brandeis that I thought we were in very serious trouble; people asked me what they could do about it, and I had no answer to give.

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Is there, indeed, anything that these people--or for that matter I, myself--could do that would make sense?

When I got back to Washington, I started to think about this, and I believe it will be best now if I simply recite to you how my thoughts developed from this point on.

The first thought that came to my mind was that--in cooperation with others--I could try to set up an organization in Washington--a sort of lobby, if you will--which would bring to Washington, from time to time, scholars and scientists who see current events in their historical perspective. These men would speak with the sweet voice of reason, and our lobby could see to it



that they shall be heard by people inside the Administration and also by the key people in Congress.

The next thing that occurred to me was that these distinguished scholars and scientists would be heard, but that they would not be listened to, if they were not able to deliver votes.

Would they be listened to if they were able to deliver votes?

The minority for which they speak might represent perhaps ten percent of the votes, and ten percent of the votes alone would not mean very much, just as the sweet voice of reason alone would not mean very much. Still, the combination of ten percent of the votes and the sweet voice of reason might turn out to be an effective combination. And, if the minority for which these men speak were sufficiently dedicated to stand ready not only to deliver votes, but also to make substantial political contributions, then this minority would be in a position to set up the most powerful lobby that ever hit Washington. The problem which the bomb poses to the world cannot be solved except by abolishing war, and nothing less will do. But first of all, we must back away from the war to which we have come dangerously close.

Could such a dedicated minority agree not only on the long-term political objectives which need to be pursued in order to attain a livable world but also on the immediate political objectives which must be pursued in the next couple of years in order to make the present danger of war recede to the point where attention can be focused on the task of abolishing war?

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I do not propose to say here much about the long-term objectives, but I want to discuss now a set of immediate political objectives on which a dedicated minority could perhaps unite. Please keep in mind, however, that this is just a first try.

The issue of bomb tests and the issue of bomb shelters are peripheral issues; they are more the symptoms of the trouble we are in than the causes of the trouble.

I would not want to say that a foolish large-scale shelter program might not also become the cause of serious trouble. But still I think that political pressure should not be focused on this issue, and the same holds for the issue of bomb tests.

The central issue which will face the Kennedy Administration is, whether America shall try to retain her strategic striking forces as a deterrent, or whether she shall retain them merely as protection. This issue has been brought into focus by the current Berlin crisis.

Currently, voices are heard demanding that free access to West Berlin shall be defended at all cost. Spokesmen of the Administration emphasize



that, if necessary, we would drop the bomb on Russia. We are told that our atomic striking forces are far superior to those of Russia, that, at this time, Russia has only 50 long-range rockets and only 150 long-range bomber planes, and that we have many more than that, and many people believe that this threat deters Russia from contesting our rights in Berlin.

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If we intend to drop our bombs on Russia in case of war and expect Russia to drop her bombs on us, so that both countries would be wholly devastated, then our threat to drop bombs on Russia is tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide.

The threat of murder and suicide is not a believable threat, in the context of the Berlin conflict, and it would not be a believable threat in the context of any other similar conflict.

The threat of dropping bombs on Russia, in case of war, would be a believable threat however if America's strategic striking forces were able to cripple most, if not all, of Russia's rocket and bomber bases by one sudden single blow, and if it were America's intention to "strike first" in case of war.

Opinions differ on how successful such a first strike would be today, and whether the Russian counterblow would demolish twenty, ten, one, or none of our cities.

Be that as it may, the Administration will have to decide whether the strategic striking forces of America shall be maintained in the long run at a level where they would have an adequate first strike capability, and whether America should adopt a "first strike if necessary" policy.

Let us pause for a moment to examine what such a policy would involve. It would involve, first of all, a great increase in the projected number of solid fuel long-range rockets, and the development of more powerful hydrogen warheads for these rockets. This would be necessary because the Russians would, of course, harden their rocket bases.

Secondly, it would involve the manufacture of a large number of rockets that would function as decoys, in order to neutralize the anti-missile missiles, by means of which the Russians may be expected to defend their bases.

Further, since we could not expect to destroy every single Russian base and submarine in a first strike, we would have to embark on a major development program in order to have adequate anti-missile missiles available for the defense of our cities.

And lastly, we would be more or less forced to embark on a shelter program involving an annual expenditure of perhaps \$20 billion. The shelters would have to protect not only against fall-out, but also against heat and blast.



The problem of getting the people into the shelters at the right time would probably offer no major obstacle, since if we plan to strike first, the Government should be in a position to get the people to take shelter at the right time.

Only if such defensive measures were included in the program would the maintenance of a first strike capability permit America to retain the bomb as a deterrent.

To me it seems conceivable that America's strategic striking forces could be boosted to the level where, for a limited period of time, they would be capable of an adequate first strike. It is not likely, however, that they could be maintained indefinitely at such a level. Presumably periods when America has a first strike capability would alternate with periods when she does not have such a capability. And if there were a major international crisis during one of the periods when we have a first strike capability, the Government would be under strong pressure to start a preventive war.

The decision to start a preventive war would always be a hard decision for any President to take, particularly since he would never be quite certain just how many of our own cities would be hit. But in certain circumstances, his hand could be forced by a commander of an overseas strategic base, or a submarine capable of launching rockets.

If a commander of a strategic base or a submarine were to drop bombs on, say, three Russian cities, then the Russians would be expected to strike back with all they have, and the President would have no choice but to order an all-out first strike against the bases of the Russians.

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A "first strike if necessary" policy would mean an atomic arms race, with the sky as the limit. I do not believe that America could be made secure by trying to keep ahead in such an arms race, and I would be in favor of resisting the adoption of such a policy, if necessary through vigorous political action.

In deciding against such a policy, we must, however, recognize, that if America renounces the "first strike if necessary" policy, she loses the deterrent effect of her strategic striking forces. For, clearly, if these forces are not capable of a first strike against Russian bases, then any threat that America would attack Russia with bombs, in case of war, would be tantamount to a threat of murder and suicide and would, therefore, not be believable.

If America renounces the first strike policy, then the strategic striking forces of America could thereafter function only as protection. If these forces are arranged in such a manner that a sudden attack on them could not substantially reduce their ability to strike a major counter-blow, then these forces may be looked upon as protection against the possibility that America might be attacked with bombs.



A clear policy decision to the effect that America is going to maintain an invulnerable second strike, but would not adopt a "first strike if necessary" policy would leave open the door to an agreement on arms control. This is important, because an agreement on arms control (providing for far-reaching disarmament) is a necessary first step towards abolishing war.

An agreement on arms control would have to involve, however, not only Russia but also China, and it is not likely that negotiations including China may get under way within the next twelve months. It might very well be, therefore, that in the immediate future America would have to take unilateral steps in order to reduce the present danger of an all-out war.

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Such unilateral steps are not adequate substitutes for negotiated agreements, and they can carry us only part of the way, but still there are some unilateral steps which need to be taken at the present time. I propose to discuss with you at this point what unilateral steps America could and should take at the present time.

(1). I believe that America could and should make unilaterally two crucially important policy decisions and that she should proclaim these decisions.

First of all, America should proclaim that she would not resort to any strategic bombing of cities or bases (either by means of atomic bombs or conventional explosives), except if American cities or bases are attacked with bombs, or if there is an unprovoked attack with bombs on cities or bases of one of America's allies.

Further, America should make a second policy decision and should proclaim this decision. In order to understand the meaning and importance of this second decision, it is necessary to consider the following:

Soon after the war, the Soviet Union proposed that the atomic bomb be outlawed. This could take the form of a unilateral pledge, given by each atomic power, that it would not resort to the use of atomic bombs either for the purpose of attacking cities or bases or as a tactical weapon to be used against troops in combat.

Recently Sulzberger discussed with Khrushchev the possibility of unilateral pledges, renouncing the use of the bomb. Khrushchev said on this occasion that if there were a war, and if at first only conventional weapons were used, subsequently the side which is about to lose the war would find it impossible to abide by its pledge and would resort to the use of the bomb.

This brings out, what I believe to be the crux of the issue, that today it might still be possible to resist force with force, but the objective of the use of force can no longer be victory. The objective can only be to exact a price.



As long as force is used at all, an all-out war which neither side wants, can be avoided only if both sides recognize that the use of force must not be aimed at victory, or anything approaching victory.

Keeping this point in mind, America could and should proclaim that if, in case of war, she were to use atomic bombs against troops in combat, she would do so only on her own side of the pre-war boundary. America would be bound by this pledge in case of war, as long as Russia imposes a similar restraint on her conduct of the war. Manifestly, this type of use of atomic bombs would be a defensive operation.

Such a pledge would be no less clear than the simple pledge renouncing the use of the bomb, but it would be much easier to keep and therefore it would be a more believable pledge. And if neither side aims at anything approaching victory, then the pledge would greatly reduce the danger of an all-out war.

When I discussed this issue in Germany three years ago, the people there said that if the ground forces of the allies were pushed back to the Rhine, and America used atomic bombs against troops in combat between the Rhine and the Oder Neisse line, many West German cities might be destroyed by American bombs. I do not know to what extent West German cities could be spared by a judicious tactical use of atomic bombs by American forces, but I do know that if America were to use bombs beyond the pre-war boundary, West German cities would be destroyed by Russian bombs.

(2). America could and should resolve that atomic bombs and the means suitable for their delivery, which are supplied by her and which are stationed in Europe, shall remain in the hands of American military units which are under American command, rather than be placed under the control of NATO. As long as we are committed to defend Western Europe, there is no valid argument for turning over bombs to the control of other Western European nations.

Germany is going to put increasingly strong pressure on the United States Government to turn over such equipment to NATO control, and I would be in favor of counterbalancing any pressure by bringing political pressure to bear on the Government.

(3). Nothing is gained by America winning meaningless battles in the cold war and a change of attitude in this regard is urgently needed. Take the international Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, for instance. This organization has at present no function whatsoever, and if it is maintained in existence at all, it should be maintained as an exercise in cooperation among the nations.

The first director of this Agency, Sterling Cole, is an American, and his term expired recently. Since next to America, the Soviet Union is the most important atomic power, we could have proposed that the next director of the Agency be a Russian. Instead, we proposed a Swede, who was not acceptable



to the Russians, and since we had the votes we were able to win a victory in a meaningless battle in the cold war.

This "victory" has reduced the chances of finding some useful function for this Agency, because the Russians resent being pushed around and there is no way for us to force them to play ball in this Agency.

I believe that it would be important for the Government to reach a major policy decision, and for the President to issue an Executive Order against fighting meaningless battles in the Cold War. Some political action in support of such an Executive Order might be necessary.

(4). We have a cultural exchange program with the Russians but their State Department and our State Department are playing a game of "if you hit our scientists, we shall hit your scientists." Accordingly, our State Department imposes senseless travel restrictions on our Russian colleagues who visit this country. These travel restrictions are not aimed at the safeguarding of any secrets, but are merely one way of hitting back at travel restrictions which the Soviet Government occasionally imposes on American scientists who travel about in Russia.

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The Russians have opened up their country to tourist travel to a considerable extent, and if we wish to encourage this development, as we probably ought to, then American tourists should not be given spying assignments. Tourists make poor spies, and we are losing more than we are gaining by trying to use them as spies.

I believe that representations ought to be made, at as high a level of the Administration as is necessary.

(a) for the Secretary of State to find some other assignment in the State Department for those who have, up till now, handled the East-West Cultural Exchange Program;

(b) for the President to issue an Executive Order to the CIA directing it to refrain from approaching those who go to Russia as tourists.

(5). Not every issue can be solved by Congress passing a law, and there are borderline issues where political action alone can bring no solution because the specific knowledge is lacking of how to go about the solution. The issue of general disarmament seems to be such a borderline issue.

I believe that, at the present time, little could be gained by bringing pressure on the Administration to enter into formal negotiations with Russia on the issue of General Disarmament, because--as they say, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink."



I believe that no substantial progress will be made towards disarmament until Americans and Russians first reach a meeting of the minds on the issue of how the peace may be secured in a disarmed world.

American reluctance to seriously contemplate general disarmament is largely due to uncertainty about this point. If it became clear that a satisfactory solution of this issue is possible, many Americans may come to regard general disarmament as a highly desirable goal.

On the issue of how to secure the peace in a disarmed world, progress could probably be made reasonably fast through non-governmental discussions among Americans and Russians. I believe that such discussions ought to be arranged through private initiative, but with the blessing of the Administration.

It does not seem likely that the newly created Disarmament Agency will be in a position to mobilize the imagination and resourcefulness which is required, and I believe that it may be necessary for a major private group to help them out or to prod them along--as the case may be. This may or may not require political action of one sort or another.

The Russians know very well that America is not ready seriously to contemplate general disarmament and this, to my mind, explains why, in spite of being strongly motivated for disarmament, the Russian Government displays in its negotiations on this issue much the same attitude as does the American Government. As far as negotiations on disarmament are concerned, hitherto both governments have been mainly guided by the public relations aspect rather than by the substantive aspect of the issue.

The Soviet Union's attitude might change overnight, however, if it became apparent that America was becoming seriously interested in disarmament.

The Russians are very much aware of the great economic benefits they would derive from disarmament, and I believe that the Soviet Union would be willing to pay a commensurate price for obtaining it. It stands to reason that this should be so. The Soviet Union spends on defense a much larger fraction of her industrial output than America does.

America is at present committed to protect certain territories which are located in the geographical proximity of Russia. In the case of general disarmament, America would not be able to live up to any such commitment. Disarmament will, therefore, be politically acceptable to America only if it is possible for her to liquidate her present commitments--without too much loss of prestige and without seriously endangering the interest of the other nations involved.

Khrushchev seems to be very much aware of this. Therefore, it is possible that if it came to serious negotiations on the issue of disarmament, and if it became manifestly necessary to reach a political settlement in order to permit America to liquidate her military commitments, then the Soviet



Union would go a long way towards seeking an accommodation.

The so-called Berlin Crisis, which centers around the commitments which America made to West Berlin, might very well be a case in point.

(6). General disarmament will, if we are lucky, eliminate war, but it will not end the rivalry between America and Russia.

It is a foregone conclusion that American efforts towards creating an orderly and livable world will be frustrated in Southeast Asia and Africa because of our failure to devise forms of democracy which would be viable in these regions of the world. The task of devising forms of democracy which would be suitable to the needs of such areas is not a task that the Government can handle. Various forms of democracy may have to be devised which are tailor-made to fit the various areas. A major private group could tackle and ought to tackle this problem. If it is not solved, more and more under-developed nations will become dictatorships; some of them may have a rapid succession of dictator after dictator and, in the end, the people may have to choose between Chaos and Communism.

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It is a foregone conclusion that America's efforts to raise the standard of living of underdeveloped nations may be frustrated in those areas where the birth rate is high, infant mortality is high, and there is little arable land left. Improvement in the standard of living will initially lead to a fall in infant mortality, and if the birth rate remains high, the population will shoot up so rapidly, that economic improvements will not be able to catch up.

Our failure to develop methods of birth control, suitable for the needs of such areas, is responsible for this state of affairs. The development of such methods is not a task which the Government can undertake. The Government could not create Research Institutes which would attract scientists who are ingenious and resourceful enough to come up with an adequate solution. The amount of money which would be involved is not much, and a major private group could and should tackle this problem.

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If it should turn out that it is possible to formulate a set of political objectives on which reasonable people could generally agree, and if these objectives could count on the all-out support of a sizable minority--admittedly a very big "if"--then I should be inclined to go further, and I would go further along the following lines:

I would ask seven to twelve distinguished scientists to form a Council, which might be called Council for Abolishing War or perhaps better, Council for a Livable World. This Council would, first of all, assemble a panel of political advisors, whose identity would be public knowledge, and then it would formulate, in close consultation with these advisors, two sets of objectives.



To the first set belong those objectives which cannot be attained at the present time through political action because it would take further inquiry and research to know, in concrete terms what needs to be done. To the second set belong those objectives which can be pursued through political action because it is clear what needs to be done.

The members of the Council would set up a research organization aimed at the pursuit of the first set of objectives, and they would serve as the Trustees of that organization. The members of the Council would also set up a political organization aimed at the pursuit of the second set of objectives, and they would serve as the Board of Directors for that organization. Because one of the functions of the second organization would be to lobby, we may refer to it for our purposes tonight as the Lobby.

The Board of the Lobby would, from time to time, revise the political objectives which it proposes to pursue and it would communicate these objectives--perhaps in the form of a series of pamphlets--to all those whom the Board believes to be seriously interested.

It seems to me that there is no need to enlist those who are interested as members of an organization. What one needs to create is not a membership organization, but a Movement.

Those who regularly receive the communications of the Board would be regarded as members of the Movement, provided that they spend, say, two percent of their income in support of the Movement. A small fraction of this amount would go to the Board for covering the operating expenses of the Lobby; the rest of it would go for political contributions made directly by each individual involved.

So that the members of the Movement may know where their political contributions would be most effective, they would have to keep in close touch with the Lobby. The Lobby would keep them informed about the key contests for seats in Congress, and the members should have no difficulty in figuring out where their contributions should go, even if the Lobby may not explicitly endorse anyone running for office.

The members of the Movement who are articulate would be expected to communicate not only with their own Congressmen and the Senators of their own states, but, also, each with at least one key member of the House or Senate. Above all, the articulate members of the Movement would be expected to discuss the relevant issues with the editors of their newspapers and various columnists, and other opinion makers, in their own community. They would be pledged to vote in the primaries, as well as in the elections. And they would be pledged to cast their vote--disregarding domestic issues--solely on the issue of war and peace.

The influence of the Lobby would be greatly enhanced if it were able to say not only how many votes it represents, in toto, but also how many votes it



represents in each state and in each congressional district. So that the Lobby may not make false representations in this regard, all those concerned would be asked, from time to time, to inform the Board if they disagree with the political objectives proclaimed or if, for any other reason, they do not intend to perform as the members of the Movement are expected to perform.

The Lobby must not wield the power that it may possess crudely. People in Washington want to be convinced, they do not want to be bribed or blackmailed. He who gives consistently financial support to certain key members of Congress may evoke their lasting friendship and may count on their willingness to listen to him as long as he talks sense. He who talks to members of Congress, but does not talk sense, will not accomplish anything of lasting value, even if he temporarily sweeps some members of Congress off their feet, by making huge political contributions to them.

There are many intelligent men in Congress who have insight into what needs to be done. The Lobby could help these men to have the courage of their convictions. There are others in Congress who are not capable of such insight. The only thing to do with them is not to return them to Congress, and to replace them with better men. This may make it necessary to persuade better men to run in the primaries and to stand for election. To find such better men must be one of the tasks of the Movement, and the Lobby must be prepared to help the members of the Movement to perform this task.

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I did not come here to enlist any of you in such a movement or to launch such a Movement. I came here to invite you to participate in an experiment that ought to show whether such a movement could be successfully launched at the present time.

First of all, I ask each of you to look into your own heart and to try to discover whether you yourself would want to participate in a political movement of the kind described, provided the objectives--as formulated from time to time--appealed to you and you thought that the Movement could be effective.

Next, you may want to ask others--within this University community--whether they might not wish to participate in the experiment also.

Those of you who wish to participate in the experiment are asked to show a copy of my speech to several people in your home community who might be interested, and to determine which of these would be likely to form part of a dedicated minority.

I would appreciate your writing me in about four to six weeks how many people you have contacted and how many of these (and who of these--(name and address) you think, could be counted upon.

Those to whom you talk in your home community should not go around and recruit still others. They may, however, introduce you to others who might be interested, and you will be then in the position to evaluate their interest and to report back.



It seems to me that there is no need to enlist those who are interested as members of an organization. What one needs to create is not a membership organization, but a Movement.

The Board of the Lobby would hold hearings, once every four months, and would subsequently proclaim in detail the immediate political objectives it proposes to support. It would communicate these objectives, perhaps in the form of a series of pamphlets, to all those who are believed to be seriously interested. Those who regularly receive the communications of the Board would be regarded as members of the Movement, if they are willing actively to support at least one of the several specific objectives proclaimed by the Board.

The articulate members of the Movement would be expected to discuss the relevant issues with editors of their newspaper and various columnists and other opinion makers in their own community. They would be expected to write to, and in other ways keep in touch with, their Congressman and the two Senators of their own State. Also each articulate member would be expected to keep in touch with at least one key member of the House or the Senate.

One of the main functions of the Lobby would be to help the members of the Movement clarify their own minds on the political objectives they wish actively to support and to help arrange appointments for those members who come to Washington to see Congressmen, Senators and certain key members of the Administration.



The members of the Movement would be regarded as pledged to vote in the primaries as well as in the elections. As far as federal elections are concerned, they would be pledged to cast their vote, disregarding domestic issues, solely on the issue of war and peace. Further, the members of the Movement would be regarded as pledged annually to spend 2 per cent of their income on political contributions.

So that each member of the Movement may know where his contribution should go, in order to be most effective in furthering the political objectives which he has chosen to pursue, the Lobby will keep in touch with each member. The Lobby would keep the members informed not only in general about the particular contests for seats in Congress which are of interest to the Movement, but it may advise one member to take an interest in one of these contests and another member to take an interest in another of these contests.

This does not mean the Lobby would explicitly endorse anyone running for office. It may be assumed that if the importance of a given contest is brought to the attention of a member, the member will have no difficulty figuring out for himself which of the two candidates for office he would want to support.

For covering the operating expenses of the Lobby and the Research Organization (which would be maintained independently and operated parallel to the Lobby), one would look to the members of the Movement.



Each year a certain group of the members would be asked by the Board of the Lobby or the Trustees of the Research Organization to contribute 2 per cent of their income to them, rather than to spend it for political contributions. One year this group might be composed of those whose names start with the letter "C". Another year it might be composed of those whose names start with the letter "R", etc.

The influence of the Movement would be greatly enhanced if the Lobby were able to say not only how many votes it represents, in toto, but also how many votes it represents in each state and in each congressional district. So that the Lobby may not make false representations, concerning the votes it may be able to deliver, the Board shall from time to time ask all those who regularly receive its communications, to say which of the political objectives proclaimed by the Board they propose to support and if they intend to perform with respect to those objectives as members of the Movement are expected to perform.

The Movement must not wield the power that it may possess crudely. People in Washington want to be convinced, they do not want to be bribed or blackmailed. He, who gives consistently financial support to certain key members of Congress, may evoke their lasting friendship and may count on their willingness to listen to them as long as they talk sense. He, who talks to members of Congress, but does not talk sense, will not accomplish anything of lasting value, even if he temporarily sweeps some members of Congress off their feet



by making huge political contributions to them.

There are many intelligent men in Congress who have insight into what goes on; the Movement could help these men to have the courage of their convictions. There are others in Congress who are not capable of such insight; the only thing to do with them is not to return them to Congress, and to replace them with better men. This may make it necessary to persuade better men to run in the primaries and to stand for election. To find such better men, must be one of the tasks of the Movement, and the Lobby must be prepared to help the members of the Movement to perform this task.

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I did not come here to enlist any of you in such a Movement or to launch such a Movement. I came here to invite you to participate in an experiment that ought to show whether such a movement could be successfully launched.

First of all, I ask each of you to look into your own heart and try to discover whether you yourself would want to participate in a political movement of the kind described, provided the objectives - as formulated from time to time - appealed to you and you thought that the Movement could be effective.

Next, you may want to ask others - within your university community - whether they might not wish to participate in the experiment also.

Those of you who wish to participate in the experiment are asked



to show a copy of this speech to people in your home community who might be interested and to determine which of these would be likely to be part of a dedicated minority that would give all-out support to a movement of the kind I have described.

I would appreciate your writing me, in about four to six weeks, how many people you have talked to and how many of these and who of these (name and address), you think, could be counted upon.

Those<sup>s</sup> to whom you talk in your home community should not go and recruit still others. They may, however, put you into contact with others who might be interested, and you will be then in the position to evaluate their interest and to report back.

This experiment is meant to be based on the communities of Harvard University, Swarthmore College, Western Reserve University, and the University of Chicago.

If enough of you collaborate in this experiment, with luck we might be in a position to know within two months whether a movement of the kind I have described could get off the ground.

Those of you who participate in this experiment may need to have a copy of this speech, and we can discuss later just how I can get a copy to you.

If the result of this experiment indicates that such a movement could get off the ground, then perhaps one would want to start the Movement with talks, in front of large student audiences across the country, from coast to coast. If within the next 12 months one could find 20 thousand students who would go all-out in support of the



Movement, and if each student would, directly or indirectly, bring ten other people into the Movement, then the Movement could rapidly attain 200,000 members. This would represent about 20 million dollars per year in political contributions, or 80 million dollars over a four-year period, and this is probably as much as one would want to have.

Whether such a movement could grow further and could come to represent one or two million votes would then probably depend on the future course of world events.

THE END